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The Wesleyan Standards.

SERMONS

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.,

Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION,

WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES,
ANALYSES, AND QUESTIONS

Adapted to the Use of Students.

BY REV. W. P. HARRISON, D.D.
Book Editor, Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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DISCARD

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DISCARD

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II.

It may be proper in this place to give a brief historical account of the Doctrinal Standards of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The first collection of Sermons published by Mr. Wesley was made in 1747, and, as he states in his Preface, the doctrines that he had preached for eight or nine years were contained in that publication. But there were various causes that induced him to increase the number, until, in the definitive edition of 1771, there were fifty-two discourses, contained in four volumes. This edition became the standard of doctrine for the Wesleyans by common consent, until in 1784 Mr. Wesley's "Deed of Declaration" was made. This deed gave a legal status to the Conference by defining its membership and naming them, and to this Conference was assigned the duty of appointing the ministers who were to preach in the chapels of the Connection.

When the chapel deeds were finally reduced to permanent form the Doctrinal Standards were nominated in the "Deed of Settlement." Early in his career Mr. Wesley had experienced some serious difficulties in regard to property trusts. Having been deprived more than once of buildings which had been erected by his own agency, he finally caused all the chapels under his jurisdiction to be placed in his name. As he was, in the eye of the law, the *owner* of the property, it would descend to his heirs in case of his death. For a long time he struggled against the peculiar conditions of the English law that compelled him, in order to secure protection for Methodist property, to *register* his chapels on the same footing as those of the Dissenters. As

Mr. Wesley repudiated the charge of being a Dissenter, it was extremely distasteful to him to be forced into a position which he did not occupy by choice. But there was no alternative except the abandonment of his chapels to the ruthless vandalism of mobs and ruffians. The chapels were registered according to law, and then the necessity arose for a legal status of the Connection.

If the chapels were deeded to boards of trustees, without any control on the part of the Annual Conference, no one could tell when and where the caprices of a few men might lead to the exclusion of Wesleyan preachers from the pulpit under the control of these local trustees. More than ever the necessity existed to place a guard upon the doctrinal teaching which was to be allowed in these chapels. It was eminently desirable to preserve unity in this regard so far as essential principles were concerned, and nothing could be more natural than the adoption of the Sermons of Mr. Wesley as the standard of doctrine. Under this preaching Methodism had grown into system and power. To retain its place among evangelical forces this preaching must be perpetuated.

Therefore, in the "Deed of Settlement" of each chapel it was placed in the hands of the local trustees, who, after the decease of Mr. Wesley, should "permit such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, or elsewhere, specified by name in a deed enrolled in chancery, under the hand and seal of the said John Wesley, and bearing date the 28th of February, 1784, and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid; provided, always, that the persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's 'Notes upon the New Testament' and four volumes of 'Sermons.'"

We see in this arrangement the following particulars: 1. The chapel property passes from the hands of Mr. Wesley to those of local trustees. 2. These trustees are to hold this property for the use of those preachers appointed by the

Annual Conference. 3. The condition precedent to the appointment of the preachers is conformity to the standard of doctrines laid down in the four volumes of Sermons and the Notes on the New Testament. 4. This appointing power is defined and made a legal person by the "Deed of Declaration" executed by Mr. Wesley and recorded in chancery. All this was accomplished prior to the ordination of Dr. Coke and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

When the Christmas Conference of 1784 assembled they unanimously elected Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury as Bishops of the independent Church then organized, and expressed their entire willingness to accept the form of Church government recommended by Mr. Wesley. The twenty-four Articles of Religion prepared by him were adopted, and one additional Article relating to civil government was prepared, making twenty-five Articles of Religion. We have, then, in the American Church the fifty-two Sermons of Mr. Wesley, the Notes on the New Testament, and the twenty-five Articles as the Standards of Doctrine, the only difference existing between the Wesleyan and Methodist Episcopal Standards being thirty-nine Articles in the one and twenty-five in the other. Recently, in 1882, the Wesleyans have adopted our twenty-five Articles except the one relating to civil government, so that Methodism in Europe and in America is now as it was in 1784—the same in doctrine.

In the beginning all members of the Annual Conference were members of the General Conference, and that body met every year. Subsequently the General Conference met once in four years, and up to 1808 all traveling preachers of four years' standing were members of the Quadrennial Conference. But in 1808 a new Constitution was formed and the General Conference was made a delegated body, meeting as such for the first time in 1812. In 1808, when the Constitution of the Church was clearly defined, after enumerating the powers of the General Conference, six restrict-

ive rules were adopted. The first of these was as follows: "The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine."

It is evident that the "standards of doctrine" here alluded to are not the Articles of Religion, for these have been previously mentioned. The reference is undoubtedly to the Sermons and Notes on the New Testament. The limitation of the Sermons to fifty-two is in accordance with the specification made in the Wesleyan "Deed of Settlement," and the edition of Mr. Wesley's Sermons in four volumes was the one supplied to the American preachers at the organization of the Church.

In accordance with this construction of the Constitution of the Church the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, have placed these Wesleyan Standards in the Course of Study for young ministers, and the present edition is arranged in two volumes. Volume I. comprises Sermons I.–XXVI., inclusive; Volume II., Sermons XXVII.–LII., inclusive.

1. Sermons XXVII.–XXXIII., inclusive, are seven discourses on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount.

2. Sermon XXXIV. is a discourse on the Nature, Properties, and Uses of the Law.

3. Sermons XXXV., XXXVI. are two discourses on the Law Established through Faith.

4. Three sermons (XXXVII.–XXXIX.) are designed to guard against enthusiasm, bigotry, and narrowness.

5. In four sermons (XL.–XLIII.) the Wesleyan doctrine of Christian Perfection is explained and defended.

6. In four sermons (XLIV.–XLVII.) we have the related subjects, Original Sin and the New Birth, and a guard against subjective difficulties common to those who search deeply their own hearts and seek inward perfection.

7. In five sermons (XLVIII.–LII.) we have a series of discourses touching the practical duties of Christian life.

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I. The separation of inward and outward religion a device of Satan. Zeal for the law of works has occasioned neglect of the righteousness which is by faith; others run into the opposite extreme, and speak evil of the law. Thus faith and works have been placed at variance with each other. Error lies in either course, the denial of the necessity for good works, or the substitution of good works for the law of faith. In the same manner the end and the means of religion have been placed at variance with each other. All religion does not consist in attending the prayers of the Church, receiving the Lord's Supper, hearing sermons, and reading good books. Love to God and our neighbor are an essential part of religion. These remarks apply with great force to religious fasting. Many persons exalt it too highly, and others undervalue it. The truth lies between the two extremes. Fasting is not all, nor is it nothing.

II. The nature of fasting. Not to eat, to abstain from food, for a time prescribed. Outward circumstances connected with it in ancient times. These indifferent matters are not mentioned approvingly in the New Testament or in the purer ages of the Church. Such evidences of humiliation are more appropriate to the worshipers of Baal and the gods of the heathen. The time of fasting usually mentioned in the Scriptures is from morning to evening. Relation of abstinence to fasting. The lowest kind of fasting. Stated fasts in the Jewish and also in the Christian Church. Occasional fasts.

III. The grounds, or reasons, and end of fasting. Under the influence of strong emotions, vehement passion, sorrow, or fear. Instances noted. This is the natural ground for fasting. Homily on fasting quoted. Abuse of lawful things another ground of fasting. The most weighty reason is that it is a help to prayer, especially when portions of time are allotted to this exercise. Still, there is no natural connection between fasting and the blessings God conveys thereby. The anger of the Lord arrested by this practice. Cases cited. The apostles enjoined the duty of fasting, joining it with prayer.

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SERMON XXVII.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

DISCOURSE VII.

"*Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.*

"*But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*

"*That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*"—MATT. vi. 16–18.

1. IT has been the endeavour of Satan, from the beginning of the world, to put asunder what God hath joined together; to separate inward from outward religion; to set one of these at variance with the other. And herein he has met with no small success among those who were "ignorant of his devices."

Many, in all ages, having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, have been strictly attached to the "righteousness of the law," the performance of outward duties, but in the mean time wholly regardless of inward righteousness, "the righteousness which is of God by faith." And many have run into the opposite extreme, disregarding all outward duties, perhaps even "speaking evil of the law, and judging the law," so far as it enjoins the performance of them.

2. It is by this very device of Satan, that faith and

works have been so often set at variance with each other. And many who had a real zeal for God have, for a time, fallen into the snare on either hand. Some have magnified faith to the utter exclusion of good works, not only from being the cause of our justification, (for we know that a man is justified freely by the redemption which is in Jesus,) but from being the necessary fruit of it, yea, from having any place in the religion of Jesus Christ. Others, eager to avoid this dangerous mistake, have run as much too far the contrary way; and either maintained that good works were the cause, at least the previous condition, of justification,—or spoken of them as if they were all in all, the whole religion of Jesus Christ.

3. In the same manner have the end and the means of religion been set at variance with each other. Some well-meaning men have seemed to place all religion in attending the prayers of the Church, in receiving the Lord's supper, in hearing sermons, and reading books of piety, neglecting, meantime, the end of all these, the love of God and their neighbour. And this very thing has confirmed others in the neglect, if not contempt, of the ordinances of God,—so wretchedly abused, to undermine and overthrow the very end they were designed to establish.

4. But of all the means of grace, there is scarce any concerning which men have run into greater extremes, than that of which our Lord speaks in the above-mentioned words; I mean religious fasting. How have some exalted this beyond all Scripture and reason;—and others utterly disregarded it; as it were, revenging themselves by undervaluing as much as the former had overvalued it! Those have spoken of it as if it were all in all; if not the end itself, yet infallibly connected with it: these, as if it were just nothing; as if it were a fruitless labour, which had no relation at all thereto. Whereas it is certain the truth lies between them both. It is not all, nor yet is it nothing. It is not the end, but it is a precious means thereto; a means which God himself has

ordained, and in which therefore, when it is duly used, he will surely give us his blessing.

In order to set this in the clearest light, I shall endeavour to show, first, what is the nature of fasting, and what the several sorts and degrees thereof: secondly, what are the reasons, grounds, and ends of it: thirdly, how we may answer the most plausible objections against it: and fourthly, in what manner it should be performed.

I. 1. I shall endeavour to show, first, what is the nature of fasting, and what the several sorts and degrees thereof. As to the nature of it, all the inspired writers, both in the Old Testament and the New, take the word, to *fast*, in one single sense, for not to eat, to abstain from food. This is so clear, that it would be labour lost to quote the words of David, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and the prophets which followed, or of our Lord and his apostles; all agreeing in this, that to fast is, not to eat for a time prescribed.

2. To this, other circumstances were usually joined by them of old, which had no necessary connection with it. Such were, the neglect of their apparel; the laying aside those ornaments which they were accustomed to wear; the putting on mourning; the strewing ashes upon their head; or wearing sackcloth next their skin. But we find little mention made in the New Testament of any of these indifferent circumstances. Nor does it appear, that any stress was laid upon them by the Christians of the purer ages; however some penitents might voluntarily use them, as outward signs of inward humiliation. Much less did the apostles, or the Christians contemporary with them, beat or tear their own flesh: such discipline as this was not unbecoming the priests or worshippers of Baal. The gods of the heathens were but devils; and it was doubtless acceptable to their devil-god, when his priests (1 Kings xviii. 28) "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner, till the blood gushed out upon them:" but it cannot be pleasing to Him, nor become his followers,

who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

8. As the degrees or measures of fasting, we have instances of some who have fasted several days together. So Moses, Elijah, and our blessed Lord, being endued with supernatural strength for that purpose, are recorded to have fasted, without intermission, "forty days and forty nights." But the time of fasting, more frequently mentioned in Scripture, is one day, from morning till evening. And this was the fast commonly observed among the ancient Christians. But beside these, they had also their half-fasts (semi jejunia, as Tertullian styles them) on the fourth and sixth days of the week, (Wednesday and Friday,) throughout the year; on which they took no sustenance till three in the afternoon, the time when they returned from the public service.

4. Nearly related to this, is what our Church seems peculiarly to mean by the term *abstinence;* which may be used when we cannot fast entirely, by reason of sickness or bodily weakness. This is the eating little; the abstaining in part; the taking a smaller quantity of food than usual. I do not remember any scriptural instance of this. But neither can I condemn it; for the Scripture does not. It may have its use, and receive a blessing from God.

5. The lowest kind of fasting, if it can be called by that name, is the abstaining from pleasant food. Of this we have several instances in Scripture, besides that of Daniel and his brethren, who, from a peculiar consideration, namely, that they might "not defile themselves with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank," (a daily provision of which the king had appointed for them,) requested and obtained, of the prince of the eunuchs, pulse to eat, and water to drink. (Daniel i. 8, &c.) Perhaps from a mistaken imitation of this might spring the very ancient custom of abstaining from flesh and wine during such times as were set apart for fasting and abstinence;—if it did not rather arise from a supposition that these were the most pleasant

food, and a belief that it was proper to use what was least pleasing at those times of solemn approach to God.

6. In the Jewish Church there were some stated fasts. Such was the fast of the seventh month, appointed by God himself to be observed by all Israel under the severest penalty. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, On the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement: and ye shall afflict your souls,—to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." (Lev. xxiii. 26, &c.) In after ages, several other stated fasts were added to these. So mention is made by the prophet Zechariah, of the fast, not only "of the seventh," but also "of the fourth, of the fifth, and of the tenth month." (viii. 19.)

In the ancient Christian Church there were likewise stated fasts, and those both annual and weekly. Of the former sort was that before Easter; observed by some for eight-and-forty hours; by others, for an entire week; by many, for two weeks; taking no sustenance till the evening of each day: of the latter, those of the fourth and sixth days of the week, observed (as Epiphanius writes, remarking it as an undeniable fact) εν ολῃ τῃ οικουμενῃ—*in the whole habitable earth;* at least in every place where any Christians made their abode. The annual fasts in our Church are, "the forty days of Lent, the Ember days at the four seasons, the Rogation days, and the Vigils or Eves of several solemn festivals;—the weekly, all Fridays in the year, except Christmas-day."

But besides those which were fixed, in every nation fearing God there have always been occasional fasts, appointed from time to time, as the particular circumstances and occasions of each required. So when "the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, came against Jehoshaphat to battle, Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah" (2 Chron. xx. 1, 3.) And so, "in the fifth year of

Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, in the ninth month," when they were afraid of the king of Babylon, the princes of "Judah proclaimed a fast before the Lord, to all the people in Jerusalem." (Jer. xxxvi. 9.)

And, in like manner, particular persons, who take heed unto their ways, and desire to walk humbly and closely with God, will find frequent occasion for private seasons of thus afflicting their souls before their Father which is in secret. And it is to this kind of fasting that the directions here given do chiefly and primarily refer.

II. 1. I proceed to show, in the second place, what are the grounds, the reasons, and ends of fasting.

And, first, men who are under strong emotions of mind, who are affected with any vehement passion, such as sorrow or fear, are often swallowed up therein, and even forget to eat their bread. At such seasons they have little regard for food, not even what is needful to sustain nature, much less for any delicacy or variety; being taken up with quite different thoughts. Thus, when Saul said, "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me;" it is recorded, "He had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night." (1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 20.) Thus those who were in the ship with St. Paul, "when no small tempest lay upon them, and all hope that they should be saved was taken away," "continued fasting, having taken nothing," no regular meal, for fourteen days together. (Acts xxvii. 33.) And thus David, and all the men that were with him, when they heard that the people were fled from the battle, and that many of the people were fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son were dead also, "mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul and Jonathan, and for the house of Israel." (2 Sam. i. 12.)

Nay, many times, they whose minds are deeply engaged are impatient of any interruption, and even loathe their needful food, as diverting their thoughts from what they desire should engross their whole

attention: even as Saul, when, on the occasion mentioned before, he had "fallen all along upon the earth, and there was no strength in him," yet said, "I will not eat," till "his servants, together with the woman, compelled him."

2. Here, then, is the natural ground for fasting. One who is under deep affliction, overwhelmed with sorrow for sin, and a strong apprehension of the wrath of God, would, without any rule, without knowing or considering whether it were a command of God or not, "forget to eat his bread," abstain not only from pleasant but even from needful food;—like St. Paul, who, after he was led into Damascus, "was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink." (Acts ix. 9.)

Yea, when the storm rose high, "when an horrible dread overwhelmed" one who had been without God in the world, his soul would "loathe all manner of meat;" it would be unpleasing and irksome to him; he would be impatient of any thing that should interrupt his ceaseless cry, "Lord, save! or I perish."

How strongly is this expressed by our Church in the first part of the Homily on Fasting:—"When men feel in themselves the heavy burden of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, and behold, with the eye of their mind, the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty God, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, [taken up,] partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathsomeness [or loathing] of all worldly things and pleasure cometh in place. So that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour of body to show themselves weary of life."

3. Another reason or ground of fasting is this. Many

of those who now fear God are deeply sensible how often they have sinned against him by the abuse of these lawful things. They know how much they have sinned by excess of food; how long they have transgressed the holy law of God, with regard to temperance, if not sobriety too; how they have indulged their sensual appetites, perhaps to the impairing even their bodily health,—certainly to the no small hurt of their soul. For hereby they continually fed and increased that sprightly folly, that airiness of mind, that levity of temper, that gay inattention to things of the deepest concern, that giddiness and carelessness of spirit, which were no other than drunkenness of soul, which stupified all their noblest faculties, no less than excess of wine or strong drink. To remove, therefore, the effect, they remove the cause: they keep at a distance from all excess. They abstain, as far as is possible, from what had wellnigh plunged them in everlasting perdition. They often wholly refrain; always take care to be sparing and temperate in all things.

4. They likewise well remember how fulness of bread increased, not only carelessness and levity of spirit, but also foolish and unholy desires, yea, unclean and vile affections. And this experience puts beyond all doubt. Even a genteel, regular sensuality is continually sensualizing the soul, and sinking it into a level with the beasts that perish. It cannot be expressed what an effect a variety and delicacy of food have on the mind as well as the body; making it just ripe for every pleasure of sense, as soon as opportunity shall invite. Therefore, on this ground, also, every wise man will refrain his soul, and keep it low; will wean it more and more from all those indulgences of the inferior appetites, which naturally tend to chain it down to earth, and to pollute as well as debase it. Here is another perpetual reason for fasting, to remove the food of lust and sensuality, to withdraw the incentives of foolish and hurtful desires, of vile and vain affections.

5. Perhaps we need not altogether omit (although I

know not if we should do well to lay any great stress upon it) another reason for fasting, which some good men have largely insisted on; namely, the punishing themselves for having abused the good gifts of God, by sometimes wholly refraining from them; thus exercising a kind of holy revenge upon themselves, for their past folly and ingratitude, in turning the things which should have been for their health into an occasion of falling. They suppose David to have had an eye to this, when he said, "I wept and chastened," or punished, "my soul with fasting;" and St. Paul, when he mentions "what revenge" godly sorrow occasioned in the Corinthians.

6. A fifth and more weighty reason for fasting is, that it is a help to prayer; particularly when we set apart larger portions of time for private prayer. Then especially it is that God is often pleased to lift up the souls of his servants above all the things of earth, and sometimes to wrap them up, as it were, into the third heavens. And it is chiefly as it is a help to prayer, that it has so frequently been found a means, in the hand of God, of confirming and increasing, not one virtue, not chastity only, (as some have idly imagined, without any ground either from Scripture, reason, or experience,) but also seriousness of spirit, earnestness, sensibility and tenderness of conscience, deadness to the world, and consequently the love of God, and every holy and heavenly affection.

7. Not that there is any natural or necessary connection between fasting, and the blessings God conveys thereby. But he will have mercy *as* he will have mercy; he will convey whatsoever seemeth him good by whatsoever means he is pleased to appoint. And he hath, in all ages, appointed this to be a means of averting his wrath, and obtaining whatever blessings we from time to time stand in need of.

How powerful a means this is to avert the wrath of God, we may learn from the remarkable instance of Ahab. "There was none like him who did sell him

self"—wholly give himself up, like a slave bought with money—"to work wickedness." Yet, when he "rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and went softly, the word of the Lord came to Elijah, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days."

It was for this end, to avert the wrath of God, that Daniel sought God "with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." This appears from the whole tenor of his prayer, particularly from the solemn conclusion of it: "O Lord, according to all thy righteousness," or mercies, "let thy anger be turned away from thy holy mountain.—Hear the prayer of thy servant, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate.—O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do, for thine own sake." (Dan. ix. 3, 16, &c.)

8. But it is not only from the people of God that we learn, when his anger is moved, to seek him by fasting and prayer; but even from the heathens. When Jonah had declared, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," the people of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them unto the least. "For the king of Nineveh arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:" (not that the beasts had sinned, or could repent; but that, by their example, man might be admonished, considering that, for his sin, the anger of God was hanging over all creatures:) "who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" And their labour was not in vain. The fierce anger of God was turned away from them. "God saw their works;" (the fruits of that repentance and faith which he had wrought in them by his prophet;) "and God repented

of the evil that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah iii. 4, &c.)

9. And it is a means not only of turning away the wrath of God, but also of obtaining whatever blessings we stand in need of. So, when the other tribes were smitten before the Benjamites, "all the children of Israel went up unto the house of God, and wept, and fasted that day until even;" and then the Lord said, "Go up" again; "for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand." (Judges xx. 26, &c.) So Samuel gathered all Israel together, when they were in bondage to the Philistines, "and they fasted on that day" before the Lord: and when "the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, the Lord thundered" upon them "with a great thunder, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel." (1 Sam. vii. 6.) So Ezra: "I proclaimed a fast at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones; and he was entreated of us." (viii. 21.) So Nehemiah: "I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, and said, Prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man:" and God granted him mercy in the sight of the king (i. 4–11.)

10. In like manner, the apostles always joined fasting with prayer when they desired the blessing of God on any important undertaking. Thus we read, (Acts xiii.,) "There were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers: as they ministered to the Lord and fasted," doubtless for direction in this very affair, "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had" a second time "fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Verses 1–3.)

Thus also Paul and Barnabas themselves, as we read in the following chapter, when they "returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls

of the disciples, and when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, commended them to the Lord." (Acts xiv. 23.)

Yea, that blessings are to be obtained in the use of this means, which are no otherwise attainable, our Lord expressly declares in his answer to his disciples, asking, "Why could not we cast him out? Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind" of devils "goeth not out but by prayer and fasting:" (Matt. xvii. 19, &c.:) —these being the appointed means of attaining that faith whereby the very devils are subject unto you.

11. These were the appointed means; for it was not merely by the light of reason, or of natural conscience, as it is called, that the people of God have been, in all ages, directed to use fasting as a means to these ends; but they have been, from time to time, taught it of God himself, by clear and open revelations of his will. Such is that remarkable one by the prophet Joel: "Therefore saith the Lord, Turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:—who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:—then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil:—I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen." (Joel ii. 12, &c.)

Nor are they only temporal blessings which God directs his people to expect in the use of these means. For, at the same time that he promised to those who should seek him with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, "I will restore to you the years which the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, my great army;" he subjoins, "So shall ye eat and be satisfied, and praise the name of the

Lord your God.—Ye shall also know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God." And then immediately follows the great gospel promise: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

12. Now whatsoever reasons there were to quicken those of old, in the zealous and constant discharge of this duty, they are of equal force still to quicken us. But, above all these, we have a peculiar reason for being "in fastings often;" namely, the command of Him by whose name we are called. He does not, indeed, in this place, expressly enjoin either fasting, giving of alms, or prayer; but his directions *how* to fast, to give alms, and to pray, are of the same force with such injunctions. For the commanding us to do any thing *thus*, is an unquestionable command to do that thing; seeing it is impossible to perform it *thus*, if it be not performed at all. Consequently, the saying, "Give alms, pray, fast, *in such a manner*," is a clear command to perform all those duties; as well as to perform them in that *manner* which shall in nowise lose its reward.

And this is a still further motive and encouragement to the performance of this duty; even the promise which our Lord has graciously annexed to the due discharge of it: "Thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Such are the plain grounds, reasons, and ends of fasting; such our encouragement to persevere therein, notwithstanding abundance of objections which men, wiser than their Lord, have been continually raising against it.

III. 1. The most plausible of these I come now to consider. And, first, it has been frequently said, "Let a Christian fast from sin, and not from food: this is what God requires at his hands." So he does; but he requires the other also Therefore, this ought to be done, and that not left undone.

View your argument in its full dimensions; and you will easily judge of the strength of it:—

If a Christian ought to abstain from sin, then he ought not to abstain from food:

But a Christian ought to abstain from sin:

Therefore he ought not to abstain from food.

That a Christian ought to abstain from sin, is most true; but how does it follow from hence that he ought not to abstain from food? Yea, let him do both the one and the other. Let him, by the grace of God, always abstain from sin; and let him often abstain from food, for such reasons and ends as experience and Scripture plainly show to be answered thereby.

2. "But is it not better" (as it has, secondly, been objected) "to abstain from pride and vanity, from foolish and hurtful desires, from peevishness, and anger, and discontent, than from food?" Without question, it is. But here again we have need to remind you of our Lord's words: "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." And, indeed, the latter is only in order to the former; it is a means to that great end. We abstain from food with this view,—that, by the grace of God conveyed into our souls through this outward means, in conjunction with all the other channels of his grace which he hath appointed, we may be enabled to abstain from every passion and temper which is not pleasing in his sight. We refrain from the one, that, being endued with power from on high, we may be able to refrain from the other. So that your argument proves just the contrary to what you designed. It proves that we ought to fast. For if we ought to abstain from evil tempers and desires, then we ought thus to abstain from food; since these little instances of self-denial are the ways God hath chose, wherein to bestow that great salvation.

3. "But we do not find it so in fact:" (this is a third objection:) "we have fasted much and often; but what did it avail? We were not a whit better; we found no blessing therein. Nay, we have found it a hinderance

rather than a help. Instead of preventing anger, for instance, or fretfulness, it has been a means of increasing them to such a height, that we could neither bear others nor ourselves." This may very possibly be the case. It is possible either to fast or pray in such a manner as to make you much worse than before; more unhappy, and more unholy. Yet the fault does not lie in the means itself, but in the manner of using it. Use it still, but use it in a different manner. Do what God commands *as* he commands it; and then, doubtless, his promise shall not fail; his blessing shall be withheld no longer; but, when thou fastest in secret, "He that seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

4. "But is it not mere superstition," (so it has been, fourthly, objected,) "to imagine that God regards such little things as these?" If you say it is, you condemn all the generations of God's children. But will you say, These were all weak, superstitious men? Can you be so hardy as to affirm this, both of Moses and Joshua, of Samuel and David, of Jehoshaphat, Ezra, Nehemiah, and all the prophets? yea, of a greater than all,—the Son of God himself? It is certain, both our Master, and all these his servants, did imagine that fasting is not a little thing, and that He who is higher than the highest doth regard it. Of the same judgment, it is plain, were all his apostles, "after they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and with wisdom." When they had the "unction of the Holy One, teaching them all things," they still approved themselves the ministers of God, "by fastings," as well as "by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." After "the bridegroom was taken from them, then did they fast in those days." Nor would they attempt any thing (as we have seen above) wherein the glory of God was nearly concerned, such as the sending forth labourers into the harvest, without solemn fasting as well as prayer.

5. "But if fasting be indeed of so great importance and attended with such a blessing, is it not best," say some, fifthly, "to fast always? not to do it now and then.

but to keep a continual fast? to use as much abstinence, at all times, as our bodily strength will bear?" Let none be discouraged from doing this. By all means use as little and plain food, exercise as much self-denial herein, at all times, as your bodily strength will bear. And this may conduce, by the blessing of God, to several of the great ends above mentioned. It may be a considerable help, not only to chastity, but also to heavenly-mindedness; to the weaning your affections from things below, and setting them on things above. But this is not fasting, scriptural fasting; it is never termed so in all the Bible. It, in some measure, answers some of the ends thereof; but still it is another thing. Practise it by all means; but not so as thereby to set aside a command of God, and an instituted means of averting his judgments, and obtaining the blessings of his children.

6. Use continually, then, as much abstinence as you please; which, taken thus, is no other than Christian temperance; but this need not at all interfere with your observing solemn times of fasting and prayer. For instance: your habitual abstinence or temperance would not prevent your fasting in secret, if you were suddenly overwhelmed with huge sorrow and remorse, and with horrible fear and dismay. Such a situation of mind would almost constrain you to fast: you would loathe your daily food; you would scarce endure even to take such supplies as were needful for the body, till God "lifted you up out of the horrible pit, and set your feet upon a rock, and ordered your goings." The same would be the case, if you were in agony of desire, vehemently wrestling with God for his blessing. You would need none to instruct you not to eat bread till you had obtained the request of your lips.

7. Again: had you been at Nineveh when it was proclaimed throughout the city, "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed or drink water, but let them cry mightily unto God;"—would your continual fast have been any

reason for not bearing part in that general humiliation? Doubtless it would not. You would have been as much concerned as any other not to taste food on that day.

No more would abstinence, or the observing a continual fast, have excused any of the children of Israel from fasting on the tenth day of the seventh month, the great annual day of atonement. There was no exception for these in that solemn decree, "Whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted," shall not fast, "in that day, he shall be cut off from among his people"

Lastly. Had you been with the brethren in Antioch, at the time when they fasted and prayed, before the sending forth of Barnabas and Saul, can you possibly imagine that your temperance or abstinence would have been a sufficient cause for not joining therein? Without doubt, if you had not, you would soon have been cut off from the Christian community. You would have deservedly been cast out from among them, as bringing confusion into the church of God.

IV. 1. I am, in the last place, to show in what manner we are to fast, that it may be an acceptable service unto the Lord. And, first, let it be done unto the Lord, with our eye singly fixed on him. Let our intention herein be this, and this alone, to glorify our Father which is in heaven; to express our sorrow and shame for our manifold transgressions of his holy law; to wait for an increase of purifying grace, drawing our affections to things above; to add seriousness and earnestness to our prayers; to avert the wrath of God; and to obtain all the great and precious promises which he hath made to us in Jesus Christ.

Let us beware of mocking God, of turning our fast, as well as our prayers, into an abomination unto the Lord, by the mixture of any temporal view, particularly by seeking the praise of men. Against this our blessed Lord more peculiarly guards us in the words of the text. "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites;" such were too many who were called the

people of God: "of a sad countenance;" sour, affectedly sad, putting their looks into a peculiar form. "For they disfigure their faces," not only by unnatural distortions, but also by covering them with dust and ashes: "that they may appear unto men to fast;" this is their chief, if not only, design. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward;" even the admiration and praise of men. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face;" do as thou art accustomed to do at other times; "that thou appear not unto men to fast;"—let this be no part of thy intention; if they know it without any desire of thine. it matters not, thou art neither the better nor the worse; —"but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

2. But, if we desire this reward, let us beware, secondly, of fancying we *merit* any thing of God by our fasting. We cannot be too often warned of this; inasmuch as a desire to "establish our own righteousness," to procure salvation of debt, and not of grace, is so deeply rooted in all our hearts. Fasting is only a way which God hath ordained, wherein we wait for his unmerited mercy; and wherein, without any desert of ours, he hath promised freely to give us his blessing.

3. Not that we are to imagine the performing the bare outward act will receive any blessing from God. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen, saith the Lord; a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" Are these outward acts, however strictly performed, all that is meant by a man's "afflicting his soul?"—"Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" No, surely: if it be a mere external service, it is all but lost labour. Such a performance may possibly afflict the body; but as to the soul, it profiteth nothing.

4. Yea, the body may sometimes be afflicted too much, so as to be unfit for the works of our calling

This also we are diligently to guard against; for we ought to preserve our health, as a good gift of God. Therefore, care is to be taken, whenever we fast, to proportion the fast to our strength. For we may not offer God murder for sacrifice, or destroy our bodies to help our souls.

But, at these solemn seasons, we may, even in great weakness of body, avoid that other extreme, for which God condemns those who of old expostulated with him for not accepting their fasts. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?—Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, saith the Lord." If we cannot wholly abstain from food, we may, at least, abstain from pleasant food; and then we shall not seek his face in vain.

5. But let us take care to afflict our souls as well as our bodies. Let every season either of public or private fasting, be a season of exercising all those holy affections which are implied in a broken and contrite heart. Let it be a season of devout mourning, of godly sorrow for sin; such a sorrow as that of the Corinthians, concerning which the apostle saith, "I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance. For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow" (η κατα Θεον λυπη,—the sorrow which is according to God, which is a precious gift of his Spirit, lifting the soul to God from whom it flows) "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." Yea, and let our sorrowing after a godly sort work in us the same inward and outward *repentance;* the same entire change of heart, renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and the same change of life, till we are holy as he is holy, in all manner of conversation. Let it work in us the same *carefulness* to be found in him, without spot and blameless; the same *clearing of ourselves,* by our lives rather than words, by our abstaining from all appearance of evil; the same *indignation,* vehement abhorrence of every sin; the same

fear of our own deceitful hearts; the same *desire* to be in all things conformed to the holy and acceptable will of God; the same *zeal* for whatever may be a means of his glory, and of our growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the same *revenge* against Satan and all his works, against all filthiness both of flesh and Spirit. (2 Cor. vii. 9, &c.)

6. And with fasting let us always join fervent prayer, pouring out our whole souls before God, confessing our sins with all their aggravations, humbling ourselves under his mighty hand, laying open before him all our wants, all our guiltiness and helplessness. This is a season for enlarging our prayers, both in behalf of ourselves and of our brethren. Let us now bewail the sins of our people; and cry aloud for the city of our God, that the Lord may build up Zion and cause his face to shine on her desolations. Thus, we may observe, the men of God, in ancient times, always joined prayer and fasting together; thus the apostles, in all the instances cited above; and thus our Lord joins them in the discourse before us.

7. It remains only, in order to our observing such a fast as is acceptable to the Lord, that we add alms thereto; works of mercy, after our power, both to the bodies and souls of men. "With such sacrifices," also, "God is well pleased." Thus the angel declares to Cornelius, fasting and praying in his house, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." (Acts x. 4, &c.) And thus God himself expressly and largely declares: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee

the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer: thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.—If," when thou fastest, "thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." (Isa. lviii. 6, &c.)

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXVII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What has Satan endeavored to do?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What have been thereby placed at variance?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is said of the end and the means of religion?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What extremes have prevailed concerning fasting?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is proposed under the first head?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What circumstances were usually joined to fasting in ancient times?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What instances are given of the degrees or measures of fasting?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) What is said of abstinence?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) What is the lowest kind of fasting?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) What is said of stated fasts?

Ques. 11. (II. 1.) What is proposed in the second place?

Ques. 12. (II. 2.) What is the natural ground of fasting?

Ques. 13. (II. 3.) What other ground is here stated?

Ques. 14. (II. 4.) What is said about the fullness of bread?

Ques. 15. (II. 5.) What other reason for fasting is stated here? Ought any stress to be placed on this?

Ques. 16. (II. 6.) What is the fifth reason?

Ques. 17. (II. 7.) Is there a natural or necessary connection between fasting and the blessings obtained by it?

Ques. 18. (II. 8.) Have others besides the people of God used these means? What instance is given?

Ques. 19. (II. 9.) What is here said of fasting as a means?

Ques. 20. (II. 10.) What do the apostles always join with fasting?

Ques. 21. (II. 11.) What is here said of these appointed means?

Ques. 22. (II. 12.) Are these conditions applicable to ourselves?

Ques. 23. (III. 1.) What is the first objection considered?

Ques. 24. (III. 2.) What is the second?

Ques. 25. (III. 3.) What is the third objection?

Ques. 26. (III. 4.) What is the fourth?

Ques. 27. (III. 5.) What is said of continual fasting?

Ques. 28. (III. 6.) What is this abstinence called?

Ques. 29. (III. 7.) What instance is given to prove that Christian temperance does not excuse us from fasting also?

Ques. 30. (IV. 1.) What is proposed here?

Ques. 31. (IV. 2.) What is said of the merit of fasting?

Ques. 32. (IV. 3.) Does the mere performance of an outward act deserve a blessing from God?

Ques. 33. (IV. 4.) How are we to guard against afflicting the body too much?

Ques. 34. (IV. 5.) What is said of afflicting the soul?

Ques. 35. (IV. 6.) What must be always joined to fasting?

Ques. 36. (IV. 7.) What must be added finally.

SERMON XXVIII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In this sermon Mr. Wesley discusses one of the most difficult questions connected with practical Christianity. Our Lord's exhortation against the hoarding of money and the accumulation of property presents to every man a test of Christian character and purpose. It is needless to say that this command is in direct conflict with all the theories of political economy, as they are expounded in the schools of philosophy. To follow the command of Christ, it is said, would lead to universal idleness, extravagance, and poverty.

Against this assertion we may place the admission of philosophers themselves, that if *all men* followed the directions of our Lord there would be no want and no poverty in the world. Given a proper incentive to diligence and activity in the temporal affairs of men, we have only to apply the principle of the Christian law of love to our neighbor in the same kind and degree as we love ourselves, and the problem finds its solution in a state of society which is the end and aim of Christian teaching. In this ideal society every man has something useful to do, and in discharging his duty to himself and to society all his wants will be supplied. Utopian this scheme has been called, but the universal prevalence of the gospel will reduce it to fact.

In his sermon on "The Use of Money" (Sermon L.) Mr. Wesley has given three short but comprehensive rules for the government of Christian life in temporal affairs. The first rule is, "Make all you can." This implies industry, energy, and the right use of all means that Providence has

given us. There is no excuse and there can be no apology for idleness. The second rule is, "Save all you can." Extravagance, wastefulness of every kind must be condemned. The third rule is, "Give all you can." This completes the circle of duty, and answers every objection to his philosophy of life. But has any one kept, in equal measure, *all* of these rules, Mr. Wesley alone excepted?

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XXVIII.

I. From religious actions our Lord proceeds to the actions of common life. The same purity of intention required. Our Lord's illustration explained and enforced. The eye is the intention. This is to the soul what the eye is to the body. It is said to be single when it looks at one thing only to know, to please, to serve, and to enjoy God. These are included in the single eye. When this is the case the whole soul is full of light.

II. Holiness is also signified by light. Seeking God in all things, we find him in all. Thus we are daily saved by grace through faith. The light also signifies happiness. Comfort and peace attend.

III. It is far otherwise if the eye be evil. The whole body is full of darkness. The veil is on the heart. The mind is blinded by the god of this world. Uncertainties, doubts, and difficulties abound. Ungodliness and unrighteousness, with evil desires, tempers, affections, and all things out of course, being dark, vile, and vain.

Destruction and unhappiness in all ways. No peace, no settled solid peace, and all is vanity and vexation of spirit. It is a state of essential night, and the shadow of death.

IV. Special exhortation against laying up treasures upon earth. Comparison of Christian nations, in point of morality, with heathens of Africa. Circumstances in which the heathen compare favorably with the Christians of Europe and America. The sin of laying up treasures upon earth common to all so-called Christians. They are constantly violating this command of Christ by all means dishonesty

alone excepted. This is the most annoying instance of spiritual infatuation in the world.

V. The sin defined. Providing things honest in the sight of men not forbidden. We are taught of God to "owe no man any thing." Nor are things needful for the body forbidden. These things defined. Nor is provision for children and the household forbidden. Things needful for the carrying on of worldly business may be laid up only in sufficient measure and degree to answer the foregoing purposes. The thing condemned is the procuring more of this world's goods than the purposes mentioned require. Address to those who violate our Lord's commandment, and the contrast with the part of the faithful and wise steward.

SERMON XXVIII.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE VIII.

'*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*
'*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*
'*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*
"*The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*
'*But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*"—MATT. vi. 19–23.

1. FROM those which are commonly termed religious actions, and which are real branches of true religion, where they spring from a pure and holy intention, and are performed in a manner suitable thereto,—our Lord proceeds to the actions of common life; and shows that the same purity of intention is as indispensably required in our ordinary business, as in giving alms, or fasting, or prayer.

And, without question, the same purity of intention, which makes our alms and devotions acceptable, must also make our labour or employment a proper offering to God. If a man pursues his business, that he may raise himself to a state of figure and riches in the world, he is no longer serving God in his employment, and has no more title to a reward from God than he who gives

alms that he may be seen, or prays that he may be heard, of men. For vain and earthly designs are no more allowable in our employments than in our alms and devotions. They are not only evil when they mix with our good works," with our religious actions, "but they have the same evil nature when they enter into the common business of our employments. If it were allowable to pursue them in our worldly employments, it would be allowable to pursue them in our devotions. But as our alms and devotions are not an acceptable service but when they proceed from a pure intention, so our common employment cannot be reckoned a service to him but when it is performed with the same piety of heart."

2. This our blessed Lord declares in the liveliest manner, in those strong and comprehensive words, which he explains, enforces, and enlarges upon, throughout this whole chapter. "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The eye is the intention: what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the soul. As the one guides all the motions of the body, so does the other those of the soul. This eye of the soul is then said to be single, when it looks at one thing only; when we have no other design but to "know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,"—to know him with suitable affections, loving him as he hath loved us; to please God in all things; to serve God (as we love him) with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and to enjoy God in all, and above all things, in time and in eternity.

3. "If thine eye be" thus "single," thus fixed on God, "thy whole body shall be full of light." "Thy whole body:"—all that is guided by the intention, as the body is by the eye: all thou art; all thou doest; thy desires, tempers, affections; thy thoughts, and words, and actions. The whole of these "shall be full of light;" full of true, divine knowledge. This is the

first thing we may here understand by light. "In his light thou shall see light." "He who of old commanded light to shine out of darkness, shall shine in thy heart:" he shall enlighten the eyes of thy understanding with the knowledge of the glory of God. His Spirit shall reveal unto thee the deep things of God. The inspiration of the Holy One shall give thee understanding, and cause thee to know wisdom secretly. Yea, the anointing which thou receivest of him "shall abide in thee, and teach thee of all things."

How does experience confirm this! Even after God hath opened the eyes of our understanding, if we seek or desire any thing else than God, how soon is our foolish heart darkened! Then clouds again rest upon our souls. Doubts and fears again overwhelm us. We are tossed to and fro, and know not what to do, or which is the path wherein we should go. But when we desire and seek nothing but God, clouds and doubts vanish away. We who "were sometimes darkness are now light in the Lord." The night now shineth as the day; and we find "the path of the upright is light." God showeth us the path wherein we should go, and maketh plain the way before our face.

4. The second thing which we may here understand by light, is holiness. While thou seekest God in all things, thou shalt find him in all,—the fountain of all holiness continually filling thee with his own likeness, with justice, mercy, and truth. While thou lookest unto Jesus, and him alone, thou shalt be filled with the mind that was in him. Thy soul shall be renewed day by day, after the image of him that created it. If the eye of thy mind be not removed from him, if thou endurest "seeing him that is invisible," and seeking nothing else in heaven or earth, then as thou beholdest the glory of the Lord, thou shalt be transformed "into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."

And it is also matter of daily experience, that "by grace we are" thus "saved through faith." It is by

faith that the eye of the mind is opened to see the light of the glorious love of God: and as long as it is steadily fixed thereon, on God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, we are more and more filled with the love of God and man; with meekness, gentleness, longsuffering; with all the fruits of holiness which are through Christ Jesus, to the glory of God the Father.

5. This light which fills him who has a single eye implies, thirdly, happiness, as well as holiness. Surely "light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to see the sun." But how much more to see the Sun of righteousness continually shining upon the soul! And if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any peace that passeth all understanding, if any rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, they all belong to him whose eye is single. Thus is his "whole body full of light." He walketh in the light as God is in the light, rejoicing ever more, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks; enjoying whatever is the will of God concerning him in Christ Jesus.

6. "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." "If thine eye be evil:"—we see there is no medium between a single and an evil eye. If the eye be not single, then it is evil. If the intention, in whatever we do, be not singly to God, if we seek any thing else, then our mind and conscience are defiled.

Our eye therefore is evil, if, in any thing we do, we aim at any other end than God; if we have any view, but to know and to love God, to please and serve him in all things; if we have any other design than to enjoy God, to be happy in him both now and for ever.

7. If thine eye be not singly fixed on God, "thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The veil shall still remain on thy heart. Thy mind shall be more and more blinded by "the god of this world," "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine upon thee." Thou wilt be full of ignorance and error touching the things of God, not being able to receive or discern them. And even when thou hast some desire to

serve God, thou wilt be full of uncertainty as to the manner of serving him; finding doubts and difficulties on every side, and not seeing any way to escape.

Yea, if thine eye be not single, if thou seek any of the things of earth, thou shalt be full of ungodliness and unrighteousness; thy desires, tempers, affections, being all out of course; being all dark, and vile, and vain. And thy conversation will be evil, as well as thy heart; not "seasoned with salt," or "meet to minister grace unto the hearers;" but idle, unprofitable, corrupt, grievous to the Holy Spirit of God.

8. Both destruction and unhappiness are in thy ways; "for the way of peace hast thou not known." There is no peace, no settled, solid peace, for them that know not God. There is no true nor lasting content for any who do not seek him with their whole heart. While thou aimest at any of the things that perish, "all that cometh is vanity;" yea, not only vanity, but "vexation of spirit," and that both in the pursuit and the enjoyment also. Thou walkest indeed in a vain shadow, and disquietest thyself in vain. Thou walkest in darkness that may be felt. Sleep on; but thou canst not take thy rest. The dreams of life can give pain; and that thou knowest: but ease they cannot give. There is no rest in this world or the world to come, but only in God, the centre of spirits.

"If the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" If the intention, which ought to enlighten the whole soul, to fill it with knowledge, and love, and peace, and which in fact does, so long as it is single, as long as it aims at God alone,—if this be darkness; if it aim at any thing beside God, and consequently cover the soul with darkness instead of light, with ignorance and error, with sin and misery; oh how great is that darkness! It is the very smoke which ascends out of the bottomless pit! It is the essential night which reigns in the lowest deep, in the land of the shadow of death!

9 Therefore "lay not up for yourselves treasures

upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." If you do, it is plain your eye is evil; it is not singly fixed on God.

With regard to most of the commandments of God, whether relating to the heart or life, the heathens of Africa or America stand much on a level with those that are called Christians. The Christians observe them (a few only being excepted) very near as much as the heathens. For instance: the generality of the natives of England, commonly called Christians, are as sober and as temperate as the generality of the heathens near the Cape of Good Hope. And so the Dutch or French Christians are as humble and as chaste as the Choctaw or Cherokee Indians. It is not easy to say, when we compare the bulk of the nations in Europe with those in America, whether the superiority lies on the one side or the other. At least, the American has not much the advantage. But we cannot affirm this with regard to the command now before us. Here the heathen has far the pre-eminence. He desires and seeks nothing more than plain food to eat, and plain raiment to put on; and he seeks this only from day to day: he reserves, he lays up nothing; unless it be as much corn at one season of the year as he will need before that season returns. This command, therefore, the heathens, though they know it not, do constantly and punctually observe. They "lay up for themselves no treasures upon earth;" no stores of purple or fine linen, of gold or silver, which either "moth or rust may corrupt, or thieves break through and steal." But how do the Christians observe what they profess to receive as a command of the most high God? Not at all; not in any degree; no more than if no such command had ever been given to man. Even the good Christians, as they are accounted by others as well as themselves, pay no manner of regard thereto. It might as well be still hid in its original Greek, for any notice they take of it. In what Christian city do you find one man of five hundred, who makes the least scruple of laying up just as

much treasure as he can,—of increasing his goods just as far as he is able? There are, indeed, those who would not do this unjustly: there are many who will neither rob nor steal; and some who will not defraud their neighbour; nay, who will not gain either by his ignorance or necessity. But this is quite another point. Even these do not scruple the thing, but the manner of it. They do not scruple the "laying up treasures upon earth," but the laying them up by dishonesty. They do not start at disobeying Christ, but at a breach of heathen morality. So that even these honest men do no more obey this command than a highwayman or a house-breaker. Nay, they never designed to obey it. From their youth up, it never entered into their thoughts. They were bred up by their Christian parents, masters, and friends, without any instruction at all concerning it; unless it were this,—to break it as soon and as much as they could, and to continue breaking it to their lives' end.

10. There is no one instance of spiritual infatuation in the world, which is more amazing than this. Most of these very men read, or hear the Bible read,—many of them every Lord's day. They have read or heard these words a hundred times, and yet never suspect that they are themselves condemned thereby, any more than by those which forbid parents to offer up their sons or daughters unto Moloch. Oh that God would speak to these miserable self-deceivers with his own voice, his mighty voice; that they may at last awake out of the snare of the devil, and the scales may fall from their eyes!

11. Do you ask what it is to "lay up treasures on earth?" It will be needful to examine this thoroughly. And let us, first, observe what is not forbidden in this command, that we may then clearly discern what is.

We are not forbidden in this command, first, to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," to provide wherewith we may render unto all their due,—whatsoever they can justly demand of us. So far from it, that

we are taught of God to "owe no man any thing." We ought, therefore, to use all diligence in our calling, in order to owe no man any thing; this being no other than a plain law of common justice, which our Lord came "not to destroy, but to fulfil."

Neither, secondly, does he here forbid the providing for ourselves such things as are needful for the body; a sufficiency of plain, wholesome food to eat, and clean raiment to put on. Yea, it is our duty, so far as God puts it into our power, to provide these things also; to the end we may eat our own bread, and be burdensome to no man.

Nor yet are we forbidden, thirdly, to provide for our children, and for those of our own household. This also it is our duty to do, even upon principles of heathen morality. Every man ought to provide the plain necessaries of life, both for his own wife and children; and to put them into a capacity of providing these for themselves, when he is gone hence and is no more seen. I say, of providing *these;* the plain necessaries of life; not delicacies; not superfluities;—and that by their diligent labour; for it is no man's duty to furnish them, any more than himself, with the means either of luxury or idleness. But if any man provide not thus far, for his own children, (as well as for the widows of his own house, of whom primarily St. Paul is speaking in those well-known words to Timothy,) he hath practically "denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," or heathen.

Lastly. We are not forbidden, in these words, to lay up, from time to time, what is needful for the carrying on our worldly business, in such a measure and degree as is sufficient to answer the foregoing purposes;—in such a measure as, first, to owe no man any thing; secondly, to procure for ourselves the necessaries of life; and, thirdly, to furnish those of our own house with them while we live, and with the means of procuring them when we are gone to God.

12. We may now clearly discern (unless we are un-

willing to discern it) what that is which is forbidden here. It is, the designedly procuring more of this world's goods than will answer the foregoing purposes. The labouring after a larger measure of worldly substance, a larger increase of gold and silver,—the laying up any more than these ends require,—is what is here expressly and absolutely forbidden. If the words have any meaning at all, it must be this; for they are capable of no other. Consequently, whoever he is that, owing no man any thing, and having food and raiment for himself and his household, together with a sufficiency to carry on his worldly business, so far as answers these reasonable purposes; whosoever, I say, being already in these circumstances, seeks a still larger portion on earth; he lives in an open, habitual denial of the Lord that bought him. "He hath" practically "denied the faith, and is worse than" an African or American "infidel."

13. Hear ye this, all ye that dwell in the world, and love the world wherein ye dwell! Ye may be "highly esteemed of men;" but ye are "an abomination in the sight of God!" How long shall your souls cleave to the dust? How long will ye load yourselves with thick clay? When will ye awake and see, that the open speculative heathens are nearer the kingdom of heaven than you? When will ye be persuaded to choose the better part; that which cannot be taken away from you? When will ye seek only to "lay up treasures in heaven;" renouncing, dreading, abhorring all other? If you aim at "laying up treasures on earth," you are not barely losing your time, and spending your strength for that which is not bread; for what is the fruit, if you succeed? —You have murdered your own soul! You have extinguished the last spark of spiritual life therein! Now, indeed, in the midst of life, you are in death! You are a living man, but a dead Christian! "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Your heart is sunk into the dust; your soul cleaveth to the ground. Your affections are set, not on things above, but on

things of the earth; on poor husks, that may poison, but cannot satisfy, an everlasting spirit made for God. Your love, your joy, your desire, are all placed on the things which perish in the using. You have thrown away the treasure in heaven. God and Christ are lost! You have gained riches and hell-fire!

14. Oh, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" When our Lord's disciples were astonished at his speaking thus, he was so far from retracting it, that he repeated the same important truth in stronger terms than before. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." How hard is it for them, whose every word is applauded, not to be wise in their own eyes! How hard for them not to think themselves better than the poor, base, uneducated herd of men! How hard not to seek happiness in their riches, or in things dependent upon them; in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life? O ye rich, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Only, with God all things are possible!

15. And even if you do not succeed, what is the fruit of your endeavouring to lay up treasures on earth? "They that will be rich" (οι βουλομενοι πλουτειν, they that *desire*, that *endeavour* after it, whether they succeed or no) "fall into temptation and a snare,"—a gin, a trap of the devil; "and into many foolish and hurtful lusts;"—επιθυμιας ανοητους, *desires* with which *reason hath nothing to do;* such as properly belong not to rational and immortal beings, but only to the brute beasts, which have no understanding;—"which drown men in destruction and perdition," in present and eternal misery. Let us but open our eyes, and we may daily see the melancholy proofs of this,—men who, desiring, resolving to be rich, coveting after money, the root of all evil, have already pierced themselves through with many sorrows, and anticipated the hell to which they are going!

The cautiousness with which the apostle here speaks

is highly observable. He does not affirm this absolutely of the rich; for a man may possibly be rich, without any fault of his, by an overruling Providence, preventing his own choice: but he affirms it of οι βουλομενοι πλουτειν, *those who desire* or seek *to be rich*. Riches, dangerous as they are, do not always "drown men in destruction and perdition;" but the *desire of riches* does. Those who calmly desire, and deliberately seek to attain them, whether they do in fact gain the world or no, do infallibly lose their own souls. These are they that sell Him who bought them with his blood, for a few pieces of gold or silver. These enter into a covenant with death and hell: and their covenant shall stand; for they are daily making themselves meet to partake of their inheritance with the devil and his angels.

16. Oh, who shall warn this generation of vipers to flee from the wrath to come! Not those who lie at their gate, or cringe at their feet, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fall from their tables. Not those who court their favour, or fear their frown; none of those who mind earthly things. But if there be a Christian upon earth, if there be a man who hath overcome the world, who desires nothing but God, and fears none but Him that is able to destroy both body and soul in hell; thou, O man of God, speak, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet! Cry aloud, and show these honourable sinners the desperate condition wherein they stand! It may be, one in a thousand may have ears to hear; may arise and shake himself from the dust; may break loose from these chains that bind him to the earth, and at length lay up treasures in heaven.

17. And if it should be, that one of these by the mighty power of God awoke and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer, according to the oracles of God, is clear, full, and express. God doth not say to thee, "Sell all that thou hast." Indeed, he who seeth the hearts of men saw it needful to enjoin this in one peculiar case, that of the young rich ruler. But he

never laid it down for a general rule to all rich men, in all succeeding generations. His general direction is, first, "Be not high-minded." God seeth not as man seeth. He esteems thee not for thy riches, for thy grandeur or equipage, for any qualification or accomplishment which is directly or indirectly owing to thy wealth, which can be bought or procured thereby. All these are with him as dung and dross: let them be so with thee also. Beware thou think not thyself to be one jot wiser or better for all these things. Weigh thyself in another balance: estimate thyself only by the measure of faith and love which God hath given thee. If thou hast more of the knowledge and love of God than he, thou art on this account, and no other, wiser and better, more valuable and honourable, than he who is with the dogs of thy flock. But if thou hast not this treasure, thou art more foolish, more vile, more truly contemptible, I will not say than the lowest servant under thy roof, but than the beggar laid at thy gate full of sores.

18. Secondly. "Trust not in uncertain riches." Trust not in them for help: and trust not in them for happiness.

First. Trust not in them for help. Thou art miserably mistaken, if thou lookest for this in gold or silver. These are no more able to set thee *above the world*, than to set thee above the devil. Know that both the world, and the prince of this world, laugh at all such preparations against them. These will little avail in the day of trouble; even if they remain in the trying hour. But it is not certain that they will; for how oft do they "make themselves wings and fly away!" But if not, what support will they afford, even in the ordinary troubles of life? The desire of thy eyes, the wife of thy youth, thy son, thine only son, or the friend which was as thy own soul, is taken away at one stroke. Will thy riches reanimate the breathless clay, or call back its late inhabitant? Will they secure thee from sickness, diseases, pain? Do these visit the poor only?

Nay, he that feeds thy flocks, or tills thy ground, has less sickness and pain than thou. He is more rarely visited by these unwelcome guests; and if they come there at all, they are more easily driven away from the little cot than from the "cloud-topt palaces." And during the time that thy body is chastened with pain, or consumes away with pining sickness, how do thy treasures help thee? Let the poor heathen answer,—

"Ut lippum pictæ tabulæ, fomenta podagram,
Auriculas citharæ collectâ sorde dolentes."*

19. But there is at hand a greater trouble than all these. Thou art to die! Thou art to sink into dust; to return to the ground from which thou wast taken; to mix with common clay. Thy body is to go to the earth as it was, while thy spirit returns to God that gave it. And the time draws on: the years slide away with a swift, though silent, pace. Perhaps your day is far spent: the noon of life is past, and the evening shadows begin to rest upon you. You feel in yourself sure approaching decay. The springs of life wear away apace. Now what help is there in your riches? Do they sweeten death? Do they endear that solemn hour? Quite the reverse. "O death, how bitter art thou to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions!" How unacceptable to him is that awful sentence, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee!" Or will they prevent the unwelcome stroke, or protract the dreadful hour? Can they deliver your soul, that it should not see death? Can they restore the years that are past? Can they add to your appointed time a month, a day, an hour, a moment? Or will the good things you have chosen for your portion here, follow you over the great gulf? Not so: naked came you into this world; naked must you return.

* "Such help as pictures to sore eyes afford,
As heap'd-up tables to their gouty lord."

"Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens
Uxor; neque harum, quas colis, arborum,
Te, præter invisas cupressos,
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur!"*

Surely, were not these truths too plain to be observed, because they are too plain to be denied, no man that is to die could possibly trust for help in uncertain riches.

20. And trust not in them for happiness: for here also they will be found "deceitful upon the weights." Indeed, this every reasonable man may infer from what has been observed already. For if neither thousands of gold and silver, nor any of the advantages or pleasures purchased thereby, can prevent our being miserable, it evidently follows, they cannot make us happy. What happiness can they afford to him who, in the midst of all, is constrained to cry out,

"To my new courts sad thought does still repair,
And round my gilded roofs hangs hovering care?"

Indeed, experience is here so full, strong, and undeniable, that it makes all other arguments needless. Appeal we therefore to fact. Are the rich and the great the only happy men? And is each of them more or less happy in proportion to his measure of riches? Are they happy at all? I had wellnigh said, they are of all men most miserable! Rich man, for once speak the truth from thy heart! Speak, both for thyself and for thy brethren!

"Amidst our plenty, something still,
To me, to thee, to him, is wanting!
That cruel something, unpossess'd,
Corrodes and leavens all the rest."

Yea, and so it will, till thy wearisome days of vanity are shut up in the night of death.

Surely, then, to trust in riches for happiness is the

* The following is Boscawen's translation of these verses from Horace:—

"Thy lands, thy dome, thy pleasing wife,
These must thou quit; 'tis nature's doom:
No tree, whose culture charms thy life,
Save the sad cypress, waits thy tomb."—Edit.

greatest folly of all that are under the sun! Are you not convinced of this? Is it possible you should still expect to find happiness in money, or all it can procure? What! can silver, and gold, and eating and drinking, and horses and servants, and glittering apparel, and diversions and pleasures (as they are called) make thee happy? They can as soon make thee immortal!

21. These are all dead show. Regard them not. Trust thou in the living God: so shalt thou be safe under the shadow of the Almighty; his faithfulness and truth shall be thy shield and buckler. He is a very present help in time of trouble; such a help as can never fail. Then shalt thou say, if all thy other friends die, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my strong Helper!" He shall remember thee when thou liest sick upon thy bed; when vain is the help of man. When all the things of the earth can give no support, he will "make all thy bed in thy sickness," he will sweeten thy pain: the consolations of God shall cause thee to clap thy hands in the flames. And even when this house of earth is well-nigh shaken down, when it is just ready to drop into the dust, he will teach thee to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God which giveth" me "the victory through" my "Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh, trust in him for happiness as well as for help. All the springs of happiness are in him. Trust "in Him who giveth us all things richly to enjoy," παρεχοντι πλουσιως παντα εις απολαυειν, —who, of his own rich and free mercy, holds them out to us as in his own hand, that, receiving them as his own gifts, and as pledges of his love, we may enjoy all that we possess. It is his love gives a relish to all we taste,—puts life and sweetness into all; while every creature leads us up to the great Creator, and all earth is a scale to heaven. He transfuses the joys that are at his own right hand into all he bestows on his thankful children; who, having fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, enjoy him in all, and above all.

22. Thirdly. Seek not to increase in goods. "Lay not up for" thyself "treasures upon earth." This is a flat, positive command; full as clear as, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." How then is it possible for a rich man to grow richer, without denying the Lord that bought him? Yea, how can any man, who has already the necessaries of life, gain or aim at more, and be guiltless? "Lay not up," saith our Lord, "treasures upon earth." If, in spite of this, you do and will lay up money or goods, which "moth or rust may corrupt, or thieves break through and steal;" if you will add house to house, or field to field,—why do you call yourself a Christian? You do not obey Jesus Christ. You do not design it. Why do you name yourself by his name? "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord," saith he himself, "and do not the things which I say?"

23. If you ask, "But what must we do with our goods, seeing we have more than we have occasion to use, if we must not lay them up? Must we throw them away?" I answer, if you threw them into the sea, if you were to cast them into the fire and consume them, they would be better bestowed than they are now. You cannot find so mischievous a manner of throwing them away, as either the laying them up for your posterity, or the laying them out upon yourselves in folly and superfluity. Of all possible methods of throwing them away, these two are the very worst: the most opposite to the gospel of Christ, and the most pernicious to your own soul.

How pernicious to your own soul the latter of these is, has been excellently shown by a late writer:—

"If we waste our money, we are not only guilty of wasting a talent which God has given us, but we do ourselves this further harm, we turn this useful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourselves; because so far as it is spent wrong, so far it is spent in the support of some wrong temper, in gratifying some vain and unreasonable desires, which, as Christians, we are obliged to renounce

"As wit and fine parts cannot be only trifled away, but will expose those that have them to greater follies; so money cannot be only trifled away, but, if it is not used according to reason and religion, will make people live a more silly and extravagant life, than they would have done without it: if, therefore, you do not spend your money in doing good to others, you must spend it to the hurt of yourself. You act like one that refuses the cordial to his sick friend, which he cannot drink himself without inflaming his blood. For this is the case of superfluous money: if you give it to those that want it, it is a cordial; if you spend it upon yourself, in something that you do not want, it only inflames and disorders your mind.

"In using riches where they have no real use, nor we any real want, we only use them to our great hurt, in creating unreasonable desires, in nourishing ill tempers, in indulging foolish passions, and supporting a vain turn of mind. For high eating and drinking, fine clothes and fine houses, state and equipage, gay pleasures and diversions, do all of them naturally hurt and disorder our heart. They are the food and nourishment of all the folly and weakness of our nature. They are all of them the support of something that ought not to be supported. They are contrary to that sobriety and piety of heart which relishes divine things. They are so many weights upon our mind, that make us less able and less inclined to raise our thoughts and affections to things above.

"So that money thus spent is not merely wasted or lost, but it is spent to bad purposes and miserable effects; to the corruption and disorder of our hearts; to the making us unable to follow the sublime doctrines of the gospel. It is but like keeping money from the poor, to buy poison for ourselves"

24. Equally inexcusable are those who lay up what they do not need for any reasonable purposes:—

"If a man had hands, and eyes and feet, that he could give to those that wanted them; if he should look

them up in a chest, instead of giving them to his brethren that were blind and lame, should we not justly reckon him an inhuman wretch? If he should rather choose to amuse himself with hoarding them up, than entitle himself to an eternal reward, by giving them to those that wanted eyes and hands, might we not justly reckon him mad?

"Now money has very much the nature of eyes and feet. If therefore we lock it up in chests, while the poor and distressed want it for their necessary uses, we are not far from the cruelty of him that chooses rather to hoard up the hands and eyes, than to give them to those that want them. If we choose to lay it up, rather than to entitle ourselves to an eternal reward by disposing of our money well, we are guilty of his madness that rather chooses to lock up eyes and hands, than to make himself for ever blessed by giving them to those that want them."

25. May not this be another reason why rich men shall so hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven? A vast majority of them are under a curse, under the peculiar curse of God; inasmuch as, in the general tenor of their lives, they are not only robbing God, continually embezzling and wasting their Lord's goods, and, by that very means, corrupting their own souls, but also robbing the poor, the hungry, the naked; wronging the widow and the fatherless; and making themselves accountable for all the want, affliction, and distress which they may but do not remove. Yea, doth not the blood of all those who perish for want of what they either lay up, or lay out needlessly, cry against them from the earth? Oh, what account will they give to Him who is ready to judge both the quick and the dead!

26. The true way of employing what you do not want yourselves, you may, fourthly, learn from those words of our Lord, which are the counterpart of what went before: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Put

out whatever thou canst spare, upon better security than this world can afford. Lay up thy treasures in the bank of heaven; and God shall restore them in that day. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again" "Place that," saith he, "unto my account. Howbeit, thou owest me thine ownself besides!"

Give to the poor with a single eye, with an upright heart; and write, "So much given to God." For "inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This is the part of a "faithful and wise steward:" not to sell either his house or lands, or principal stock, be it more or less, unless some peculiar circumstance should require it; and not to desire or endeavour to increase it, any more than to squander it away in vanity; but to employ it wholly to those wise and reasonable purposes for which his Lord has lodged it in his hands. The wise steward, after having provided his own household with what is needful for life and godliness, makes himself friends with all that remains, from time to time, of the "mammon of unrighteousness; that when he fails, they may receive him into everlasting habitations,' —that whensoever his earthly tabernacle is dissolved, they who were before carried into Abraham's bosom, after having eaten his bread, and worn the fleece of his flock, and praised God for the consolation, may welcome him into paradise, and into "the house of God, eternal in the heavens."

27. We "charge" you, therefore, "who are rich in this world," as having authority from our great Lord and Master, αγαθοεργειν, to be *habitually doing good*, to live in a course of good works. "Be ye merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful;" who doeth good and ceaseth not. "Be ye merciful,"—how far? After your power; with all the ability which God giveth. Make this your only measure of doing good; not any beggarly maxims or customs of the world. We "charge you to be rich in good works;"

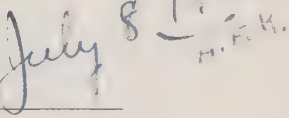
as you have much, to give plenteously. "Freely ye have received, freely give;" so as to lay up no treasure but in heaven. Be ye "ready to distribute" to every one, according to his necessity. Disperse abroad; give to the poor; deal your bread to the hungry. Cover the naked with a garment; entertain the stranger; carry or send relief to them that are in prison. Heal the sick; not by miracle, but through the blessing of God upon your seasonable support. Let the blessing of him that was ready to perish through pining want come upon thee. Defend the oppressed, plead the cause of the fatherless, and make the widow's heart sing for joy.

28. We exhort you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be "willing to communicate;" κοινωνικους ειναι; to be of the same spirit (though not in the same outward state) with those believers of ancient times, who remained steadfast εν τη κοινωνια, in that blessed and holy *fellowship*, wherein "none said that any thing was his own, but they had all things common." Be a steward, a faithful and wise steward, of God and of the poor; differing from them in these two circumstances only,—that your wants are first supplied, out of the portion of your Lord's goods which remains in your hands; and that you have the blessedness of giving. Thus "lay up for yourselves a good foundation," not in the world which now is, but rather "for the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life." The great foundation indeed of all the blessings of God, whether temporal or eternal, is the Lord Jesus Christ,—his righteousness and blood,—what he hath done, and what he hath suffered for us. And "other foundation" in this sense, "can no man lay;" no, not an apostle; no, not an angel from heaven. But through his merits, whatever we do in his name is a foundation for a good reward, in the day when "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." Therefore "labour" thou "not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." Therefore,

"whatsoever thy hand" now "findeth to do, do it with thy might." Therefore let

> "No fair occasion pass unheeded by:
> Snatching the golden moments as they fly,
> Thou by few fleeting years insure eternity!"

"By patient continuance in well-doing, seek" thou "for glory, and honour, and immortality." In a constant, zealous performance of all good works, wait thou for that happy hour when the King shall say, "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"



HYMN.

COME, Saviour, Jesus, from above!
Assist me with thy heavenly grace;
Empty my heart of earthly love,
And for thyself prepare the place.

Oh, let thy sacred presence fill,
And set my longing spirit free,
Which pants to have no other will,
But day and night to feast on thee.

While in this region here below,
No other good will I pursue;
I'll bid this world of noise and show,
With all its glittering snares, adieu.

That path with humble speed I'll seek,
In which my Saviour's footsteps shine;
Nor will I hear, nor will I speak
Of any other love but thine.

Henceforth may no profane delight
Divide this consecrated soul;
Possess it thou, who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.

Wealth, honour, pleasure, and what else
This short-enduring world can give,
Tempt as ye will, my soul repels,
To Christ alone resolved to live.

Thee can I love, and thee alone,
With pure delight and inward bliss:
To know thou tak'st me for thine own,
Oh, what a happiness is this!

Nothing on earth do I desire,
But thy pure love within my breast:
This, only this, will I require,
And freely give up all the rest.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXVIII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) From religious actions to what does our Lord proceed?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is the light of the body? What is said of the intention? When is the eye of the soul said to be single?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What follows when the eye is single?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What is the second thing understood by light?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What does light imply thereby?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) What follows when the eye is evil?

Ques. 7. (¶ 7.) What is said of the evil in the heart?

Ques. 8. (¶ 8.) What is said of destruction and unhappiness?

Ques. 9. (¶ 9.) What is said of those who lay up treasures upon earth? How are they compared with the heathen?

Ques. 10. (¶ 10.) What is said of this spiritual infatuation?

Ques. 11. (¶ 11.) How is this sin defined?

Ques. 12. (¶ 12.) What may we now clearly discern? What is the sin of laying up treasures upon earth?

Ques. 13. (¶ 13.) How are these sinners addressed?

Ques. 14. (¶ 14.) What does our Lord say concerning rich men?

Ques. 15. (¶ 15.) What is said of those who desire to be rich?

Ques. 16. (¶ 16.) Who are the proper persons to warn these men?

Ques. 17. (¶ 17.) What is said of those who may be awak-

ened to a sense of their danger? Does God require them to sell all they have? Does the case of the young ruler apply to all rich men?

Ques. 18. (¶ 18.) What is here said of trusting in riches?

Ques. 19. (¶ 19.) What greater trouble is here mentioned?

Ques. 20. (¶ 20.) Can riches afford happiness? Why not?

Ques. 21. (¶ 21.) In whom should we trust?

Ques. 22. (¶ 22.) What is the third injunction?

Ques. 23. (¶ 23.) What question and answer are joined here?

Ques. 24. (¶ 24.) What class is said to be inexcusable?

Ques. 25. (¶ 25.) Under what peculiar curse are rich men here stated to be? What inquiry is here made?

Ques. 26. (¶ 26.) What is the true way of employing what we do not want for ourselves?

Ques. 27. (¶ 27.) What charge is here given to rich men?

Ques. 28. (¶ 28.) What exhortation concludes the discourse?

SERMON XXIX.

ANALYSIS.

I. The mongrel worship of the Samarians. Fearing the Lord and serving their own gods a charge to which modern Christians are liable. But neither the heathens of former times nor the so-called Christians of our age do really fear the Lord, because neither of these classes have kept his commandments. No man can serve two masters.

II. Mammon defined. The service of God and the service of Mammon explained. We can only serve God when we believe him. What this belief implies. The second requirement is to love God. The third is to resemble or imitate him. The last requirement to obey him. These are essential properties of the service of God.

III. The service of Mammon defined. Trusting in riches. Trusting in the world for happiness. This makes the world the ultimate end of action and design. Secondly, the service of Mammon implies loving the world. Conformity to its customs, opinions, and practices. Lastly, to obey the world by outward conformity to whatever it requires.

IV. The two conditions cannot be reconciled. The service of God and Mammon cannot be given consistently with the nature of man. Further, it is not possible to obey and serve both.

V. Providence and economy not forbidden. Taking no thought for the morrow does not justify idleness and improvidence. Industry is commended. The right ordering and thoughtful arrangement of business pursuits not forbidden, but enjoined. The care of the head is not, therefore,

condemned, but the care of the heart. Anxious, uneasy care, that which wastes the blood and drinks up the spirit, anticipates all the misery it fears, and torments us before the time. This is the species of care forbidden. Provisions for the bodily wants, food and raiment will be given, if we first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. This righteousness explained.

VI. Anxiety for the future which disqualifies us for our present duty is forbidden. Both in temporal and spiritual things this anxiety may manifest itself, and it is at variance with the duty and happiness of the present hour in either case. The temptations of to-morrow should not disturb us. When the morrow comes, all of its good and evil will be sufficient for the strength of the day, but no more. Every day brings its trials and its grace. Sufficient unto the day is both the good and the evil thereof.

SERMON XXIX.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE IX.

"*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

"*Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

"*Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

"*Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

"*And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

"*And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

"*Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith.*

"*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

"*(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*

"*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

"*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*"—MATT. vi. 24–34

1. IT is recorded of the nations whom the king of Assyria, after he had carried Israel away into captivity, placed in the cities of Samaria, that "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods." "These nations," saith the inspired writer, "feared the Lord;" performed an outward service to him; (a plain proof that they had a fear of God, though not according to knowledge;) "and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day." (2 Kings xvii. 33, &c.)

How nearly does the practice of most modern Christians resemble this of the ancient heathens! "They fear the Lord;" they also perform an outward service to him, and hereby show they have some fear of God; but they likewise "serve their own gods." There are those who "teach them," as there were who taught the Assyrians, "the manner of the God of the land;" the God whose name the country bears to this day, and who was once worshipped there with an holy worship: "Howbeit" they do not serve him alone; they do not fear him enough for this: but "every nation maketh gods of their own: every nation in the cities wherein they dwell." "These nations fear the Lord;" they have not laid aside the outward form of worshipping him; but "they serve their graven images," silver and gold, the work of men's hands: money, pleasure, and praise, the gods of this world, more than divide their service with the God of Israel. This is the manner both of "their children and their children's children; as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

2. But although, speaking in a loose way, after the common manner of men, those poor heathens were said

to "fear the Lord," yet we may observe the Holy Ghost immediately adds, speaking according to the truth and real nature of things, "They fear not the Lord, neither do after the law and the commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob; with whom the Lord made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor serve them: but the Lord your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of your enemies."

The same judgment is passed by the unerring Spirit of God, and indeed by all, the eyes of whose understanding he hath opened to discern the things of God, upon these poor Christians, commonly so called. If we speak according to the truth and real nature of things, "they fear not the Lord, neither do they serve him." For they do not "after the covenant the Lord hath made with them, neither after the law and commandment which he hath commanded them, saying, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." "They serve other gods unto this day." And "no man can serve two masters."

3. How vain is it for any man to aim at this,—to attempt the serving of two masters! Is it not easy to foresee what must be the unavoidable consequence of such an attempt? "Either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." The two parts of this sentence, although separately proposed, are to be understood in connection with each other; for the latter part is a consequence of the former. He will naturally hold to him whom he loves. He will so cleave to him, as to perform to him a willing, faithful, and diligent service. And, in the mean time, he will so far at least despise the master he hates as to have little regard to his commands, and to obey them, if at all, in a slight and careless manner. Therefore, whatsoever the wise men of the world may suppose, "ye cannot serve God and mammon."

4. Mammon was the name of one of the heathen gods, who was supposed to preside over riches. It is here understood of riches themselves; gold and silver, or, in general, money: and, by a common figure of speech, of all that may be purchased thereby; such as ease, honour, and sensual pleasure.

But what are we here to understand by serving God, and what by serving mammon?

We cannot serve God, unless we *believe* in him. This is the only true foundation of serving him. Therefore, the believing in God, as "reconciling the world to himself through Christ Jesus," the believing in him, as a loving, pardoning God, is the first great branch of his service

And thus to believe in God implies, to trust in him as our strength, without whom we can do nothing, who every moment endues us with power from on high, without which it is impossible to please him; as our help, our only help in time of trouble, who compasseth us about with songs of deliverance; as our shield, our defender, and the lifter up of our head above all our enemies that are round about us.

It implies, to trust in God as our happiness; as the centre of spirits; the only rest of our souls; the only good who is adequate to all our capacities, and sufficient to satisfy all the desires he hath given us.

It implies, (what is nearly allied to the other,) to trust in God as our end; to have an eye to him in all things; to use all things only as a means of enjoying him: wheresoever we are, or whatsoever we do, to see him that is invisible, looking on us well pleased, and to refer all things to him in Christ Jesus.

5. Thus to believe, is the first thing we are to understand by serving God. The second is, to *love* him.

Now to love God, in the manner the Scripture describes, in the manner God himself requires of us, and, by requiring, engages to work in us,—is to love him as the ONE GOD; that is, "with all our heart, and with all

our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength;"—it is to desire God alone for his own sake; and nothing else, but with reference to him;—to rejoice in God;—to delight in the Lord; not only to seek, but find, happiness in him; to enjoy God as the chiefest among ten thousand; to rest in him, as our God and our all;—in a word, to have such a possession of God as makes us always happy.

6. A third thing we are to understand by serving God is, to *resemble* or *imitate* him.

So the ancient father: *Optimus Dei cultus, imitari quem colis:* "It is the best worship or service of God to imitate him you worship."

We here speak of imitating or resembling him in the spirit of our minds: for here the true Christian imitation of God begins. "God is a Spirit;" and they that imitate or resemble him must do it "in spirit and in truth."

Now God is love: therefore, they who resemble him in the spirit of their minds are transformed into the same image. They are merciful even as he is merciful. Their soul is all love. They are kind, benevolent, compassionate, tender-hearted; and that not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. Yea, they are, like him, loving unto every man, and their mercy extends to all his works.

7. One thing more we are to understand by serving God, and that is, the *obeying* him; the glorifying him with our bodies, as well as with our spirits; the keeping his outward commandments; the zealously doing whatever he hath enjoined; the carefully avoiding whatever he hath forbidden; the performing all the ordinary actions of life with a single eye and a pure heart, offering them all in holy, fervent love, as sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.

8. Let us consider now, what we are to understand, on the other hand, by serving mammon. And, first, it implies, the *trusting* in riches, in money, or the things

purchasable thereby, as our strength,—the means whereby we shall perform whatever cause we have in hand; the trusting in them as our help,—by which we look to be comforted in or delivered out of trouble.

It implies, the trusting in the world for happiness; the supposing that "a man's life," the comfort of his life, "consisteth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" the looking for rest in the things that are seen; for content in outward plenty; the expecting that satisfaction in the things of the world, which can never be found out of God.

And if we do this, we cannot but make the world our end; the ultimate end, if not of all, at least of many, of our undertakings, many of our actions and designs; in which we shall aim only at an increase of wealth, at the obtaining pleasure or praise, at the gaining a larger measure of temporal things, without any reference to things eternal.

9. The serving mammon implies, secondly, *loving* the world; desiring it for its own sake; the placing our joy in the things thereof, and setting our hearts upon them; the seeking (what indeed it is impossible we should find) our happiness therein; the resting, with the whole weight of our souls, upon the staff of this broken reed; although daily experience shows it cannot support, but will only "enter into our hand and pierce it."

10. To *resemble*, to be *conformed* to, the world, is a third thing we are to understand by serving mammon; to have not only designs, but desires, tempers, affections, suitable to those of the world; to be of an earthly, sensual mind, chained down to the things of earth; to be self-willed, inordinate lovers of ourselves, to think highly of our own attainments; to desire and delight in the praise of men; to fear, shun, and abhor reproach; to be impatient of reproof, easy to be provoked, and swift to return evil for evil.

11. To serve mammon is, lastly, to *obey* the world,

by outwardly conforming to its maxims and customs; to walk as other men walk, in the common road, in the broad, smooth, beaten path; to be in the fashion; to follow a multitude; to do like the rest of our neighbours; that is, to do the will of the flesh and the mind, to gratify our appetites and inclinations; to sacrifice to ourselves; aim at our own ease and pleasure, in the general course both of our words and actions.

Now what can be more undeniably clear than that we cannot thus serve God and mammon?

12. Does not every man see, that he cannot *comfortably* serve both? that to trim between God and the world is the sure way to be disappointed in both, and to have no rest either in one or the other? How uncomfortable a condition must he be in, who, having the fear but not the love of God,—who, serving him, but not with all his heart,—has only the toils and not the joys of religion! He has religion enough to make him miserable, but not enough to make him happy; his religion will not let him enjoy the world; and the world will not let him enjoy God. So that, by halting between both, he loses both, and has no peace either in God or the world.

13. Does not every man see, that he cannot serve both *consistently* with himself? What more glaring inconsistency can be conceived, than must continually appear in his whole behaviour, who is endeavouring to obey both these masters,—striving to "serve God and mammon?" He is indeed "a sinner that goeth two ways;" one step forward and another backward. He is continually building up with one hand, and pulling down with the other. He loves sin, and he hates it: he is always seeking, and yet always fleeing from, God. He would, and he would not. He is not the same man for one day; no, not for an hour together. He is a motley mixture of all sorts of contrarieties; a heap of contradictions jumbled in one. Oh, be consistent with thyself one way or the other! Turn to the right hand or to the left. If mammon be God, serve thou him; if the Lord

then serve him. But never think of serving either at all, unless it be with thy whole heart.

14. Does not every reasonable, every thinking man see, that he cannot *possibly* serve God and mammon? because there is the most absolute contrariety, the most irreconcilable enmity, between them. The contrariety between the most opposite things on earth, between fire and water, darkness and light, vanishes into nothing, when compared to the contrariety between God and mammon. So that, in whatsoever respect you serve the one, you necessarily renounce the other. Do you believe in God through Christ? Do you trust in him as your strength, your help, your shield, and your exceeding great reward?—as your happiness?—your end in all, above all things? Then you cannot trust in riches. It is absolutely impossible you should, so long as you have this faith in God. Do you thus trust in riches? Then you have denied the faith. You do not trust in the living God. Do you love God? Do you seek and find happiness in him? Then you cannot love the world, neither the things of the world. You are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to you. Do you love the world? Are your affections set on things beneath? Do you seek happiness in earthly things? Then it is impossible you should love God. Then the love of the Father is not in you. Do you resemble God? Are you merciful, as your Father is merciful? Are you transformed, by the renewal of your mind, into the image of Him that created you? Then you cannot be conformed to the present world. You have renounced all its affections and lusts. Are you conformed to the world? Does your soul still bear the image of the earthly? Then you are not renewed in the spirit of your mind. You do not bear the image of the heavenly. Do you obey God? Are you zealous to do his will on earth as the angels do in heaven? Then it is impossible you should obey mammon. Then you set the world at open defiance. You trample its customs and maxims under foot, and will neither follow nor be led by them

Do you follow the world? Do you live like other men? Do you please men? Do you please yourself? Then you cannot be a servant of God. You are of your master and father, the devil.

15. Therefore, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Thou shalt lay aside all thoughts of obeying two masters, of serving God and mammon. Thou shalt propose to thyself no end, no help, no happiness, but God. Thou shalt seek nothing in earth or heaven but him; thou shalt aim at nothing, but to know, to love, and enjoy him. And because this is all your business below, the only view you can reasonably have, the one design you are to pursue in all things,—"Therefore I say unto you," (as our Lord continues his discourse,) "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on:"—a deep and weighty direction, which it imports us well to consider, and thoroughly to understand.

16. Our Lord does not here require, that we should be utterly without thought, even touching the concerns of this life. A giddy, careless temper is at the farthest remove from the whole religion of Jesus Christ. Neither does he require us to be "slothful in business," to be slack and dilatory therein. This, likewise, is contrary to the whole spirit and genius of his religion. A Christian abhors sloth as much as drunkenness; and flees from idleness as he does from adultery. He well knows that there is one kind of thought and care with which God is well pleased; which is absolutely needful for the due performance of those outward works unto which the providence of God has called him.

It is the will of God, that every man should labour to eat his own bread; yea, and that every man should provide for his own, for them of his own household. It is likewise his will, that we should "owe no man any thing, but provide things honest in the sight of all men." But this cannot be done without taking some thought, with out having some care upon our minds; yea, often, no

without long and serious thought, not without much and earnest care. Consequently, this care, to provide for ourselves and our household, this thought how to render to all their dues, our blessed Lord does not condemn. Yea, it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

It is good and acceptable to God, that we should so take thought concerning whatever we have in hand, as to have a clear comprehension of what we are about to do, and to plan our business before we enter upon it And it is right that we should carefully consider, from time to time, what steps we are to take therein; as well as that we should prepare all things beforehand, for the carrying it on in the most effectual manner. This care, termed by some, "the care of the head," it was by no means our Lord's design to condemn.

17. What he here condemns is, the care of the heart; the anxious, uneasy care; the care that hath torment: all such care as does hurt, either to the soul or body What he forbids is, that care which sad experience shows, wastes the blood and drinks up the spirits; which anticipates all the misery it fears, and comes to torment us before the time. He forbids only that care which poisons the blessings of to-day, by fear of what may be to-morrow; which cannot enjoy the present plenty, through apprehensions of future want. This care is not only a sore disease, a grievous sickness of soul, but also a heinous offence against God. A sin of the deepest dye. It is a high affront to the gracious Governor and wise Disposer of all things; necessarily implying, that the great Judge does not do right; that he does not order all things well. It plainly implies, that he is wanting, either in wisdom, if he does not know what things we stand in need of; or in goodness, if he does not provide those things for all who put their trust in him. Beware, therefore, that you take not thought in this sense: be ye anxiously careful for nothing. Take no uneasy thought: this is a plain, sure rule Uneasy care is unlawful care. With a single

eye to God, do all that in you lies to provide things honest in the sight of all men: and then give up all into better hands; leave the whole event to God.

18. "Take no thought" of this kind, no uneasy thought, even "for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" If, then, God gave you life, the greater gift, will he not give you food to sustain it? If he hath given you the body, how can ye doubt but he will give you raiment to cover it? more especially, if you give yourselves up to him, and serve him with your whole heart. "Behold," see before your eyes, "the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;" and yet they lack nothing; "yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" Ye that are creatures capable of God, are ye not of more account in the eyes of God? of a higher rank in the scale of beings? "And which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature!" What profit have you then from this anxious thought? It is every way fruitless and unavailing.

"And why take ye thought for raiment?" Have ye not a daily reproof wherever you turn your eyes? "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven," (is cut down, burned up, and seen no more,) "shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" you, whom he made to endure for ever and ever, to be pictures of his own eternity! Ye are indeed of little faith; otherwise ye could not doubt of his love and care; no, not for a moment.

19. "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat," if we lay up no treasure upon earth? "What shall we drink," if we serve God with all our strength,

if our eye be singly fixed on him? "Wherewithal shall we be clothed," if we are not conformed to the world, if we disoblige those by whom we might be profited? "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek,"—the heathens who know not God. But ye are sensible "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And he hath pointed out to you an infallible way of being constantly supplied therewith: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you."

20. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God:"—before ye give place to any other thought or care, let it be your concern that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (who "gave his only begotten Son," to the end that, believing in him, "ye might not perish, but have everlasting life") may reign in your heart, may manifest himself in your soul, and dwell and rule there; that he may "cast down every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Let God have the sole dominion over you: let him reign without a rival: let him possess all your heart, and rule alone. Let him be your one desire, your joy, your love; so that all that is within you may continually cry out, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

"Seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Righteousness is the fruit of God's reigning in the heart. And what is righteousness, but love?—the love of God and of all mankind, flowing from faith in Jesus Christ, and producing humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, patience, deadness to the world; and every right disposition of heart, toward God and toward man. And by these it produces all holy actions, whatsoever are lovely or of good report; whatsoever works of faith and labour of love are acceptable to God, and profitable to man.

"His righteousness:"—this is all His righteousness still: it is his own free gift to us, for the sake of Jesus Christ the righteous, through whom alone it is

purchased for us: and it is His work; it is He alone that worketh it in us, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

21. Perhaps the well observing this may give light to some other scriptures, which we have not always so clearly understood. St. Paul, speaking in his Epistle to the Romans concerning the unbelieving Jews, saith, "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." I believe this may be one sense of the words: they were "ignorant of God's righteousness," not only of the righteousness of Christ, imputed to every believer, whereby all his sins are blotted out, and he is reconciled to the favour of God; but (which seems here to be more immediately understood) they were ignorant of that inward righteousness, of that holiness of heart, which is with the utmost propriety termed "God's righteousness;" as being both his own free gift through Christ, and his own work by his almighty Spirit. And because they were "ignorant" of this, they "went about to establish their own righteousness." They laboured to establish that outside righteousness which might very properly be termed their own. For neither was it wrought by the Spirit of God, nor was it owned or accepted of him. They might work this themselves, by their own natural strength; and when they had done, it was a stink in his nostrils. And yet, trusting in this, they would "not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God." Yea, they hardened themselves against that faith whereby alone it was possible to obtain it. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Christ, when he said, "It is finished!" put an end to the law,—to the law of external rites and ceremonies, that he might bring a better righteousness through his blood, by that one oblation of himself once offered, even the image of God, into the inmost soul of every one that believeth.

22. Nearly related to these are those words of the

apostle, in his Epistle to the Philippians: "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ;" an entrance into his everlasting kingdom; "and be found in him," believing in him, "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." "Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law;" a barely external righteousness, the outside religion I formerly had, when I hoped to be accepted of God because I was, "touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless;"—"but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;" that holiness of heart, that renewal of the soul in all its desires, tempers, and affections, "which is of God," (it is the work of God and not of man,) "by faith;" through the faith of Christ, through the revelation of Jesus Christ in us, and by faith in his blood; whereby alone we obtain the remission of our sins, and an inheritance among those that are sanctified.

23. "Seek ye first" this "kingdom of God" in your hearts; this righteousness, which is the gift and work of God, the image of God renewed in your souls; "and all these things shall be added unto you;" all things needful for the body; such a measure of all as God sees most for the advancement of his kingdom. These shall be added,—they shall be thrown in, over and above. In seeking the peace and the love of God, you shall not only find what you more immediately seek, even the kingdom that cannot be moved; but also what you seek not,—not at all for its own sake, but only in reference to the other. You shall find, in your way to the kingdom, all outward things, so far as they are expedient for you. This care God hath taken upon himself: cast you all your care upon him. He knoweth your wants; and whatsoever is lacking he will not fail to supply.

24. "Therefore take no thought for the morrow." Not only, take ye no thought how to lay up treasures on earth, how to increase in worldly substance; take no thought how to procure more food than you can

eat, or more raiment than you can put on, or more money than is required from day to day, for the plain, reasonable purposes of life;—but take no uneasy thought, even concerning those things which are absolutely needful for the body. Do not trouble yourself now, with thinking what you shall do at a season which is yet afar off. Perhaps that season will never come; or it will be no concern of yours:—before then you will have passed through all the waves, and be landed in eternity. All those distant views do not belong to you, who are but a creature of a day. Nay, what have you to do with the morrow, more strictly speaking? Why should you perplex yourself without need? God provides for you to-day what is needful to sustain the life which he hath given you. It is enough: give yourself up into his hands. If you live another day, he will provide for that also.

25. Above all, do not make the care of future things a pretence for neglecting present duty. This is the most fatal way of "taking thought for the morrow." And how common is it among men! Many, if we exhort them to keep a conscience void of offence, to abstain from what they are convinced is evil, do not scruple to reply, "How then must we live? Must we not take care of ourselves and of our families?" And this they imagine to be a sufficient reason for continuing in known, wilful sin. They say, and perhaps think, they would serve God now, were it not that they should, by and by, lose their bread. They would prepare for eternity; but they are afraid of wanting the necessaries of life. So they serve the devil for a morsel of bread; they rush into hell for fear of want; they throw away their poor souls, lest they should, some time or other, fall short of what is needful for their bodies!

It is not strange that they who thus take the matter out of God's hand should be so often disappointed of the very things they seek; that, while they throw away heaven to secure the things of earth, they lose the one, but do not gain the other. The jealous God, in the wise

course of his providence, frequently suffers this. So that they who will not cast their care on God, who, taking thought for temporal things, have little concern for things eternal, lose the very portion which they have chosen. There is a visible blast on all their undertakings; whatsoever they do, it doth not prosper; insomuch that, after they have forsaken God for the world, they lose what they sought, as well as what they sought not: they fall short of the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; nor yet are other things added unto them.

26. There is another way of "taking thought for the morrow," which is equally forbidden in these words. It is possible to take thought in a wrong manner, even with regard to spiritual things; to be so careful about what may be by-and-by, as to neglect what is now required at our hands. How insensibly do we slide into this, if we are not continually watching unto prayer! How easily are we carried away, in a kind of waking dream, projecting distant schemes, and drawing fine scenes in our own imagination! We think, what good we will do when we are in such a place, or when such a time is come! How useful we will be, how plenteous in good works, when we are easier in our circumstances! How earnestly we will serve God, when once such an hinderance is out of the way!

Or perhaps you are now in heaviness of soul: God, as it were, hides his face from you. You see little of the light of his countenance: you cannot taste his redeeming love. In such a temper of mind, how natural it is to say, "Oh, how I will praise God, when the light of his countenance shall be again lifted up upon my soul! How will I exhort others to praise him, when his love is again shed abroad in my heart! Then I will do thus and thus: I will speak for God in all places: I will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Then I will redeem the time: I will use to the uttermost every talent I have received." Do not believe thyself. Thou wilt not do it then, unless thou doest it now. "He that is

faithful in that which is little," of whatsoever kind it be, whether it be worldly substance, or the fear or love of God, "will be faithful in that which is much." But if thou now hidest one talent in the earth, thou wilt then hide five: that is, if ever they are given; but there is small reason to expect they ever will. Indeed, "unto him that hath," that is, uses what he hath, "shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. But from him that hath not," that is, uses not the grace which he hath already received, whether in a larger or smaller degree, "shall be taken away even that which he hath."

27. And take no thought for the temptations of to-morrow. This also is a dangerous snare. Think not, "When such a temptation comes, what shall I do! how shall I stand? I feel I have not power to resist: I am not able to conquer that enemy." Most true: you have not now the power which you do not now stand in need of. You are not able at this time to conquer that enemy; and at this time he does not assault you. With the grace you have now, you could not withstand the temptations which you have not. But when the temptation comes, the grace will come. In greater trials you will have greater strength. When sufferings abound, the consolations of God will, in the same proportion, abound also. So that, in every situation, the grace of God will be sufficient for you. He doth not suffer you "to be tempted" to-day "above that ye are able to bear;" and "in every temptation he will make a way to escape." "As thy days, so thy strength shall be."

28. "Let the morrow," therefore, "take thought for the things of itself:" that is, When the morrow comes, then think of it. Live thou to-day. Be it thy earnest care to improve the present hour. This is your own; and it is your all. The past is as nothing, as though it had never been. The future is nothing to you: it is not yours; perhaps it never will be. There is no depending on what is yet to come; for you "know not what a day may

bring forth." Therefore, live to-day; lose not an hour: use this moment, for it is your portion. "Who knoweth the things which have been before him, or which shall be after him under the sun?" The generations that were from the beginning of the world, where are they now? Fled away: forgotten. They were: they lived their day; they were shook off the earth, as leaves off their trees: they mouldered away into common dust! Another and another race succeeded; then they "followed the generation of their fathers, and shall never more see the light." Now is thy turn upon the earth "Rejoice, O young man, in the days of thy youth!" Enjoy the very, very now, by enjoying Him "whose years fail not." Now let thine eye be singly fixed on Him in "whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!" Now give Him thy heart; now stay thyself on Him; now be thou holy, as He is holy! Now lay hold on the blessed opportunity of doing his acceptable and perfect will! Now rejoice to "suffer the loss of all things," so thou mayest "win Christ!"

29. Gladly suffer to-day, for his name's sake, whatsoever he permits this day to come upon thee. But look not at the sufferings of to-morrow. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Evil it is, speaking after the manner of men; whether it be reproach or want, pain or sickness. But in the language of God, all is blessing: it is a precious balm, prepared by the wisdom of God, and variously dispensed among his children, according to the various sicknesses of their souls. And he gives in one day sufficient for that day; proportioned to the want and strength of the patient. If, therefore, thou snatchest to-day what belongs to the morrow; if thou addest this to what is given thee already, it will be more than thou canst bear: this is the way not to heal, but to destroy, thy own soul. Take, therefore, just as much as he gives thee to-day: to-day, do and suffer his will! To-day, give up thyself, thy body, soul, and spirit, to God, through Christ Jesus; desiring nothing, but that God may be glorified in all thou art, all thou doest, all

thou sufferest; seeking nothing, but to know God and his Son Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit; pursuing nothing, but to love him, to serve him, and to enjoy him at this hour, and to all eternity!

Now unto "God the Father, who hath made me and all the world;" unto "God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind;" unto "God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God;" be honour and praise, majesty and dominion, for ever and ever! Amen.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXIX.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is here said of the Samarians?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Did they truly fear the Lord? What is said of many Christians of our day?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is said of the attempt to serve two masters?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What was the meaning of Mammon?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is the first thing understood in the phrase "serving God?" What is the second?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) What is the third? How can we resemble, or imitate, God?

Ques. 7. (¶ 7.) What more is understood by serving God?

Ques. 8. (¶ 8.) What is meant by serving Mammon?

Ques. 9. (¶ 9.) What is implied in it, secondly?

Ques. 10. (¶ 10.) What is meant by conformity to the world?

Ques. 11. (¶ 11.) What is here included in the service of Mammon?

Ques. 12. (¶ 12.) What is said of trimming between the two?

Ques. 13. (¶ 13.) What glaring inconsistency is mentioned?

Ques. 14. (¶ 14.) Is it possible to serve God and Mammon?

Ques. 15. (¶ 15.) What conclusion is here stated?

Ques. 16. (¶ 16.) Does our Lord require us to be utterly without thought for the morrow? Is industry or foresight in temporal things lawful?

Ques. 17. (¶ 17.) What, then, is here condemned?

Ques. 18. (¶ 18.) What kind of thought is forbidden?

Ques. 19. (¶ 19.) How is our Lord's saying applied?

Ques. 20. (¶ 20.) What is first to be sought? What is "his righteousness?"

Ques. 21 (¶ 21.) How is light thrown on some other scriptures by this interpretation?

Ques. 22. (¶ 22.) What words are nearly related?

Ques. 23. (¶ 23.) Why are we first to seek the kingdom of God?

Ques. 24. (¶ 24.) What is meant then by "taking no thought for the morrow?"

Ques. 25. (¶ 25.) What is said, above all, to be important?

Ques. 26. (¶ 26.) What other way is forbidden?

Ques. 27. (¶ 27.) What is said of the temptations of to-morrow?

Ques. 28. (¶ 28.) What is meant by letting the morrow take thought for the things of itself?

Ques. 29. What is the duty of to-day?

Ques. 30. How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XXX.

ANALYSIS.

I. Our Lord proceeds to point out the hinderances of religion. In the fifth chapter we find inward religion in all of its various branches. In the sixth, how all of our actions may be made holy. In the former part of this chapter we have the most common and most fatal hinderances of holiness. In the latter part we are exhorted to break through all, and secure the prize.

II. The first caution is against judging. The rule laid down is equitable and of universal application, and the caution against judging is needful for every child of God. Equally applicable, it was probably originally designed for the children of the world. The figures of the mote and the beam explained. The meaning of "judge not." Thinking of another in a manner contrary to love. Condemning the guilty in a higher degree than he deserves. Condemning any one without sufficient evidence. Illustration from the saying of Seneca.

III. Frequent as the occasions are, the commission of this sin may be avoided. By seeking to be reconciled to those who trespass against us, and using the means pointed out in the Scriptures. When the beam is cast out, we should be careful that we receive no hurt by endeavoring to help others. While we are not lightly to account any persons as "dogs," we must beware that we do not degrade holy things by untimely, improper, or injudicious presentation of them. Zeal which is not according to knowledge may betray us into this error. Intemperate zeal injures ourselves without

benefiting them. When it clearly appears that any persons are wicked and stubborn, likely to abuse holy things, we should refrain from casting pearls before swine. This is spoken especially of private Christians, not of ministers engaged in proclaiming the gospel to miscellaneous congregations. Whether these hear or mock, the preacher must proclaim the truth. But careful, prudent, and loving methods should distinguish all who endeavor to lead men to the knowledge of the gospel.

IV. However great may be present discouragements, by perseverance in humble and faithful prayer we may overcome at last. We have only to ask, and it shall be given. The certainty of a gracious answer is stated in many ways and in many forms. As a further means of assurance, we have the illustration of the father and the son. The child who asks for bread will not receive a stone. In all cases, however, we must be actuated by charity for all men, for thus we fulfill the royal law, the golden rule of mercy. "This is the law and the prophets."

SERMON XXX.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE X.

"*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*
"*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*
"*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*
"*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*
"*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*
"*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*
"*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*
"*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*
"*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*
"*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*
"*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*
"*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*"—MATT. vii. 1–12.

1. OUR blessed Lord, having now finished his main design, having first delivered the sum of true religion,

carefully guarded against those glosses of men whereby they would make the word of God of none effect; and having next laid down rules touching that right intention which we are to preserve in all outward actions; now proceeds to point out the main hinderances of this religion, and concludes all with a suitable application.

2. In the fifth chapter, our great Teacher has fully described inward religion in its various branches. He has there laid before us those dispositions of soul which constitute real Christianity; the tempers contained in that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;" the affections which, when flowing from their proper fountain, from a living faith in God through Christ Jesus, are intrinsically and essentially good and acceptable to God. In the sixth, he hath shown how all our actions, likewise, even those that are indifferent in their own nature, may be made holy, and good, and acceptable to God, by a pure and holy intention. Whatever is done without this, he declares, is of no value with God: whereas, whatever outward works are thus consecrated to God are, in his sight, of great price.

3. In the former part of this chapter, he points out the most common and most fatal hinderances of this holiness: in the latter, he exhorts us, by various motives, to break through all, and secure that prize of our high calling.

4. The first hinderance he cautions us against is judging. "Judge not that ye be not judged." Judge not others, that ye be not judged of the Lord; that ye bring not vengeance on your own heads. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again:"—a plain and equitable rule, whereby God permits you to determine for yourselves, in what manner he shall deal with you in the judgment of the great day.

5. There is no station of life, nor any period of time, from the hour of our first repenting and believing the

gospel, till we are made perfect in love, wherein this caution is not needful for every child of God. For occasions of judging can never be wanting; and the temptations to it are innumerable; many whereof are so artfully disguised, that we fall into the sin before we suspect any danger. And unspeakable are the mischiefs produced hereby,—always to him that judges another; thus wounding his own soul, and exposing himself to the righteous judgment of God;—and frequently to those who are judged, whose hands hang down, who are weakened and hindered in their course, if not wholly turned out of the way, and caused to turn back even to perdition. Yea, how often, when this "root of bitterness springs up, are many defiled thereby;" by reason whereof the way of truth itself is evil spoken of, and that worthy name blasphemed, whereby we are called!

6. Yet it does not appear that our Lord designed this caution only, or chiefly, for the children of God; but rather for the children of the world, for the men who know not God. These cannot but hear of those who are not of the world; who follow after the religion above described; who endeavour to be humble, serious, gentle, merciful, and pure in heart; who earnestly desire such measures of these holy tempers as they have not yet attained, and wait for them in doing all good to all men, and patiently suffering evil. Whoever go but thus far, cannot be hid, no more than "a city set upon a hill." And why do not those who "see their good works, glorify their Father which is in heaven?" What excuse have they for not treading in their steps?—for not imitating their example, and being followers of them, as they are also of Christ? Why, in order to provide an excuse for themselves, they condemn those whom they ought to imitate. They spend their time in finding out their neighbours' faults, instead of amending their own. They are so busied about others going out of the way, that themselves never come into it at all; at least, never get forward, never go beyond a poor dead form of godliness, without the power.

7. It is to these more especially that our Lord says, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye:"—the infirmities, the mistakes, the imprudence, the weakness of the children of God:—"but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Thou considerest not the damnable impenitence, the satanic pride, the accursed self-will, the idolatrous love of the world, which are in thyself, and which make thy whole life an abomination to the Lord. Above all, with what supine carelessness and indifference art thou dancing over the mouth of hell! And "how then," with what grace, with what decency or modesty, "wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye;" —the excess of zeal for God, the extreme of self-denial, the too great disengagement from worldly cares and employments, the desire to be day and night in prayer, or hearing the words of eternal life? "And, behold, a beam is in thine own eye!" Not a mote, like one of these.—"Thou hypocrite!" who pretendest to care for others, and hast no care for thy own soul; who makest a show of zeal for the cause of God, when in truth thou neither lovest nor fearest him! "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye:" cast out the beam of impenitence! Know thyself! See and feel thyself a sinner! Feel that thy inward parts are very wickedness, that thou art altogether corrupt and abominable, and that the wrath of God abideth on thee! Cast out the beam of pride; abhor thyself; sink down as in dust and ashes; be more and more little, and mean, and base, and vile in thine own eyes. Cast out the beam of self-will! Learn what that meaneth, "If any man will come after me, let him renounce himself." Deny thyself, and take up thy cross daily. Let thy whole soul cry out, "I came down from heaven," for so thou didst, thou never-dying spirit, whether thou knowest it or no,—"not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Cast out the beam of love of the world Love not the world, neither the things of the world. Be thou crucified unto the world, and the world crucified

unto thee. Only *use* the world, but *enjoy* God. Seek all thy happiness in Him! Above all, cast out the grand beam, that supine carelessness and indifference! Deeply consider that "one thing is needful;" the one thing which thou hast scarce ever thought of. Know and feel, that thou art a poor, vile, guilty worm, quivering over the great gulf! What art thou? A sinner born to die; a leaf driven before the wind; a vapour ready to vanish away; just appearing, and then scattered into air, to be no more seen! See this! "And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Then, if thou hast leisure from the concerns of thy own soul, thou shalt know how to correct thy brother also.

8. But what is properly the meaning of this word, "Judge not?" What is the judging which is here forbidden? It is not the same as evil-speaking, although it is frequently joined therewith. Evil-speaking is the relating any thing that is evil concerning an absent person; whereas judging may indifferently refer either to the absent or the present. Neither does it necessarily imply the speaking at all, but only the thinking evil of another. Not that all kind of thinking evil of others is that judging which our Lord condemns. If I see one commit robbery or murder, or hear him blaspheme the name of God, I cannot refrain from thinking ill of the robber or murderer. Yet this is not evil judging: there is no sin in this, nor any thing contrary to tender affection.

9. The thinking of another in a manner that is contrary to love, is that judging which is here condemned; and this may be of various kinds. For, first, we may think another to blame when he is not. We may lay to his charge (at least in our own mind) the things of which he is not guilty; the words which he has never spoke, or the actions which he has never done. Or we may think his manner of acting was wrong, although in reality it was not. And even where nothing can justly be blamed, either in the thing itself, or in the manner of doing it, we may suppose his intention was not good,

and so condemn him on that ground; at the same time that He who searches the heart sees his simplicity and godly sincerity.

10. But we may not only fall into the sin of judging by condemning the innocent; but also, secondly, by condemning the guilty in a higher degree than he deserves. This species of judging is likewise an offence against justice, as well as mercy; and yet such an offence as nothing can secure us from but the strongest and tenderest affection. Without this, we readily suppose one who is acknowledged to be in fault, to be more in fault than he really is. We undervalue whatever good is found in him. Nay, we are not easily induced to believe that any thing good can remain in him in whom we have found any thing that is evil.

11. All this shows a manifest want of that love which ου λογιζεται κακον, *thinketh no evil;* which never draws an unjust or unkind conclusion from any premises whatsoever. Love will not infer from a person's falling once into an act of open sin, that he is accustomed so to do; that he is habitually guilty of it: and if he was habitually guilty once, love does not conclude he is so still; much less that if he is now guilty of this, therefore he is guilty of other sins also. These evil reasonings all pertain to that sinful judging which our Lord here guards us against; and which we are in the highest degree concerned to avoid, if we love either God or our own souls.

12. But supposing we do not condemn the innocent, neither the guilty any farther than they deserve; still we may not be altogether clear of the snare: for there is a third sort of sinful judging, which is the condemning any person at all where there is not sufficient evidence. And be the facts we suppose ever so true, yet that does not acquit us. For they ought not to have been supposed, but proved; and till they were, we ought to have formed no judgment;—I say, "till they were;" for neither are we excused, although the facts admit of ever so strong a proof, unless that proof be produced before

we pass sentence, and compared with the evidence on the other side. Nor can we be excused, if ever we pass a full sentence before the accused has spoken for himself. Even a Jew might teach us this, as a mere lesson of justice, abstracted from mercy and brotherly love: "Doth our law," says Nicodemus, "judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" (John vii. 51.) Yea, a heathen could reply, when the chief of the Jewish nation desired to have judgment against his prisoner, "It is not the manner of the Romans" to judge "any man, before he that is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."

13. Indeed, we could not easily fall into sinful judging, were we only to observe that rule which another* of those heathen Romans affirms to have been the measure of his own practice. "I am so far," says he, "from lightly believing every man's or any man's evidence against another, that I do not easily or immediately believe a man's evidence against himself. I always allow him second thoughts, and many times counsel too." Go, thou who art called a Christian, and do likewise; lest the heathen rise and condemn thee in that day!

14. But how rarely should we condemn or judge one another, at least how soon would that evil be remedied, were we to walk by that clear and express rule which our Lord himself has taught us!—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee," or if thou hear or believe that he hath, "go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone." This is the first step thou art to take. "But if he will not hear, take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." This is the second step "If he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church;' either to the overseers thereof, or to the whole congregation. Thou hast then done thy part. Then think of it no more, but commend the whole to God.

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* Seneca.

15. But supposing thou hast by the grace of God "cast the beam out of thine own eye," and dost now clearly see "the mote" or the beam "which is in thy brother's eye," yet beware thou dost not receive hurt thyself by endeavouring to help him. Still "give not that which is holy unto dogs." Do not lightly account any to be of this number; but if it evidently appear that they deserve the title, then "cast ye not your pearls before swine." Beware of that zeal which is not according to knowledge. For this is another great hinderance in their way who would be "perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect." They who desire this cannot but desire that all mankind should partake of the common blessing. And when we ourselves first partake of the heavenly gift, the divine "evidence of things not seen," we wonder that all mankind do not see the things which we see so plainly; and make no doubt at all but we shall open the eyes of all we have any intercourse with. Hence we are for attacking all we meet without delay and constraining them to see, whether they will or no: and by the ill success of this intemperate zeal we often suffer in our own souls. To prevent this spending our strength in vain, our Lord adds this needful caution, (needful to all, but more especially to those who are now warm in their first love,) "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

16. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." Beware of thinking that any deserve this appellation, till there is full and incontestable proof, such as you can no longer resist. But when it is clearly and indisputably proved, that they are unholy and wicked men, not only strangers to, but enemies to God, to all righteousness and true holiness: "give not that which is holy," το αγιον—"the holy thing," emphatically so called, unto these. The holy, the peculiar doctrines of the gospel—such as were hid from the ages and generations of old, and are now made known to us, only by the revelation

of Jesus Christ, and the inspiration of his Holy Spirit—are not to be prostituted unto these men, who know not if there be any Holy Ghost. Not indeed that the ambassadors of Christ can refrain from declaring them in the great congregation, wherein some of these may probably be: we must speak, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear; but this is not the case with private Christians. They do not bear that awful character; nor are they under any manner of obligation to force these great and glorious truths on them who contradict and blaspheme, who have a rooted enmity against them. Nay, they ought not so to do, but rather to lead them as they are able to bear. Do not begin a discourse with these upon remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; but talk with them in their own manner, and upon their own principles. With the rational, honourable, and unjust epicure, reason of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." This is the most probable way to make Felix tremble. Reserve higher subjects for men of higher attainments.

17. Neither "cast your pearls before swine." Be very unwilling to pass this judgment on any man; but if the fact be plain and undeniable, if it is clear beyond all dispute, if the swine do not endeavour to disguise themselves, but rather glory in their shame, making no pretence to purity, either of heart or life, but working all uncleanness with greediness; then cast not ye your pearls before them. Talk not to them of the mysteries of the kingdom; of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; which, of consequence, as they have no other inlets of knowledge, no spiritual senses, it cannot enter into their hearts to conceive. Tell not them of the exceeding great and precious promises which God hath given us in the Son of his love. What conception can they have of being made partakers of the divine nature, who do not even desire to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust! Just as much knowledge as swine have of pearls, and as much relish as they have for them; so much relish have they for the

deep things of God, so much knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, who are immersed in the mire of this world, in worldly pleasures, desires, and cares. Oh, cast not those pearls before these, "lest they trample them under their feet!"—lest they utterly despise what they cannot understand, and speak evil of the things which they know not. Nay, it is probable, this would not be the only inconvenience which would follow: it would not be strange, if they were, according to their nature, to "turn again and rend you;" if they were to return you evil for good, cursing for blessing, and hatred for your good-will. Such is the enmity of the carnal mind against God, and all the things of God. Such is the treatment you are to expect from these, if you offer them the unpardonable affront of endeavouring to save their souls from death, to pluck them as brands out of the burning.

18. And yet you need not utterly despair even of these, who, for the present, "turn again and rend you." For if all your arguments and persuasives fail, there is yet another remedy left, and one that is frequently found effectual, when no other method avails: this is prayer. Therefore, whatever you desire or want, either for others or for your own soul, "ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The neglect of this is a third grand hinderance of holiness. Still we "have not, because we ask not." Oh, how meek and gentle, how lowly in heart, how full of love both to God and man, might ye have been at this day, if you had only asked; if you had continued instant in prayer! Therefore, now, at least, "ask, and it shall be given unto you." "Ask," that ye may thoroughly experience, and perfectly practise, the whole of that religion which our Lord has here so beautifully described. It shall then be given you to be holy as he is holy, both in heart and in all manner of conversation. "Seek," in the way he hath ordained, in searching the Scriptures, in hearing his word, in meditating thereon, in fasting, in partaking of the supper of

the Lord, and surely ye shall find: ye shall find that pearl of great price, that faith which overcometh the world, that peace which the world cannot give, that love which is the earnest of your inheritance. "Knock;" continue in prayer, and in every other way of the Lord: be not weary or faint in your mind: press on to the mark: take no denial; let him not go until he bless you. "And the door" of mercy, of holiness, of heaven, "shall be opened unto you."

19. It is in compassion to the hardness of our heart, so unready to believe the goodness of God, that our Lord is pleased to enlarge upon this head, and to repeat and confirm what he hath spoken. "For every one," saith he, "that asketh, receiveth;" so that none need come short of the blessing; "and he that seeketh," even every one that seeketh, "findeth" the love and the image of God: "and to him that knocketh," to every one that knocketh, the gate of righteousness shall be opened. So that here is no room for any to be discouraged, as though they might ask, or seek, or knock in vain. Only remember always to pray, to seek, to knock, and not to faint. And then the promise standeth sure. It is firm as the pillars of heaven;—yea, more firm; for heaven and earth shall pass away; but his word shall not pass away.

20. To cut off every pretence for unbelief, our blessed Lord, in the following verses, illustrates yet further what he had said, by an appeal to what passes in our own breasts: "What man," said he, "is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone?" Will even natural affection permit you to refuse the reasonable request of one you love? "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Will he give him hurtful instead of profitable things? So that even from what you feel and do yourselves, you may receive the fullest assurance, as on the one hand, that no ill effect can possibly attend your asking, so, on the other, that it will be attended with that good effect, a full supply of all your wants. For "if ye, being evil, know how to give good

gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven," who is pure, unmixed, essential goodness, "give good things to them that ask him?" or, (as he expresses it on another occasion,) "give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him?" In him are included all good things; all wisdom, peace, joy, love; the whole treasures of holiness and happiness; all that God hath prepared for them that love him.

21. But that your prayer may have its full weight with God, see that ye be in charity with all men. For, otherwise, it is more likely to bring a curse than a blessing on your own head; nor can you expect to receive any blessing from God while you have not charity towards your neighbour. Therefore, let this hinderance be removed without delay. Confirm your love towards one another, and towards all men. And love them not in word only, but in deed and in truth. "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

22. This is that royal law, that golden rule of mercy, as well as justice, which even the heathen emperor caused to be written over the gate of his palace; a rule which many believe to be naturally engraved on the mind of every one that comes into the world. And thus much is certain, that it commends itself, as soon as heard, to every man's conscience and understanding; insomuch that no man can knowingly offend against it, without carrying his condemnation in his own breast.

23. "This is the law and the prophets." Whatsoever is written in that law which God of old revealed to mankind, and whatsoever precepts God has given by his holy prophets which have been since the world began, they are all summed up in these few words, they are all contained in this short direction. And this, rightly understood, comprises the whole of that religion which our Lord came to establish upon earth.

24. It may be understood either in a positive or negative sense. If understood in a negative sense, the

meaning is, "Whatever ye would not that men should do to you, do not ye unto them." Here is a plain rule, always ready at hand, always easy to be applied. In all cases relating to your neighbour, make his case your own. Suppose the circumstances to be changed, and yourself to be just as he is now; and then beware that you indulge no temper or thought, that no word pass out of your lips, that you take no step, which you should have condemned in him, upon such a change of circumstances. If understood in a direct and positive sense, the plain meaning of it is, "Whatsoever you could reasonably desire of him, supposing yourself to be in his circumstances, that do, to the uttermost of your power, to every child of man."

25. To apply this in one or two obvious instances: It is clear to every man's own conscience, we would not that others should judge us, should causelessly or lightly think evil of us; much less would we that any should speak evil of us,—should publish our real faults or infirmities. Apply this to yourself. Do not unto another what you would not he should do unto you; and you will never more judge your neighbour, never causelessly or lightly think evil of any one; much less will you speak evil; you will never mention even the real fault of an absent person, unless so far as you are convinced it is absolutely needful for the good of other souls.

26. Again: We would that all men should love and esteem us, and behave towards us according to justice, mercy, and truth. And we may reasonably desire, that they should do us all the good they can do, without injuring themselves; yea, that in outward things, (according to the known rule,) their superfluities should give way to our conveniences; their conveniences, to our necessities; and their necessities, to our extremities. Now, then, let us walk by the same rule: let us do unto all as we would they should do to us. Let us love and honour all men. Let justice, mercy, and truth govern all our minds and actions. Let our superfluities give way to our neighbour's conveniences; (and who ther

will have any superfluities left?) our conveniences, to our neighbour's necessities; our necessities, to his extremities.

27. This is pure and genuine morality. This do, and thou shalt live. "As many as walk by this rule, peace be to them and mercy;" for they are "the Israel of God." But then, be it observed, none can walk by this rule, (nor ever did from the beginning of the world,) none can love his neighbour as himself, unless he first love God. And none can love God, unless he believe in Christ; unless he have redemption through his blood, and the Spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. Faith, therefore, is still the root of all, of present as well as future salvation. Still we must say to every sinner, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:" thou shalt be saved now, that thou mayest be saved for ever; saved on earth, that thou mayest be saved in heaven. Believe in him, and thy faith will work by love. Thou wilt love the Lord thy God, because he hath loved thee: thou wilt love thy neighbour as thyself: and then it will be thy glory and joy to exert and increase this love; not barely by abstaining from what is contrary thereto, from every unkind thought, word, and action, but by showing all that kindness to every man which thou wouldest he should show unto thee.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXX.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) To what does our Lord now proceed?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What was described in the fifth chapter? In the sixth?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What does the former part of this chapter point out?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What is the first hinderance?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) Is this caution needful for the children of God? And always?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) Was it designed chiefly for them?

Ques. 7. (¶ 7.) To whom is the expression concerning the "mote in thy brother's eye" addressed?

Ques. 8. (¶ 8.) What is properly the meaning of "judge not?"

Ques. 9. (¶ 9.) What is the judging here condemned?

Ques. 10. (¶ 10.) What do we when we condemn the innocent?

Ques. 11. (¶ 11.) What does all this show?

Ques. 12. (¶ 12.) What is the third sort of sinful judging?

Ques. 13. (¶ 13.) What rule does Seneca give us?

Ques. 14. (¶ 14.) How can we best avoid this sin? What clear and express rule does our Lord give?

Ques. 15. (¶ 15.) Even if we do not err in judging, how may we receive hurt?

Ques. 16. (¶ 16.) Ought we lightly to call any one a "dog?" But if the epithet is deserved, what then?

Ques. 17. (¶ 17.) What is meant by "casting pearls before swine?"

Ques. 18. (¶ 18.) What reason have we to persevere, even

in the face of failure? What remedy is left after arguments and persuasions fail?

Ques. 19. (¶ 19.) Why does our Lord enlarge upon this head?

Ques. 20. (¶ 20.) How does he deprive of us every pretense for unbelief?

Ques. 21. (¶ 21.) What is necessary to give our prayer its full weight?

Ques. 22. (¶ 22.) What rule or law do some believe to be naturally engraved on the minds of all men?

Ques. 23. (¶ 23.) What is meant by "this is the law and the prophets?"

Ques. 24. (¶ 24.) How may it be understood? What is the negative sense? What the positive?

Ques. 25. (¶ 25.) How is this reasoning applied?

Ques. 26. (¶ 26.) How is the positive view illustrated here?

Ques. 27. (¶ 27.) What is this teaching called? What follows obedience to it?

Ques. 28. (¶ 27.) Can the ungenerate heart obey this law?

SERMON XXXI.

ANALYSIS.

I. Our Lord now proceeds to hinderances from without. These occasion multitudes to draw back. By every variety of expression he cautions us against ill example and ill advice. Enter at the strait gate. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to hell. The way to heaven is through the strait gate, by the narrow way.

II. The commandment takes cognizance of all our actions, words, and thoughts. Sin is equally broad, as every breach of the commandment is sin. There is only one way to keep, there are many ways to break, the commandment. The parent sins extend in all directions. The carnal mind, being enmity against God, and pride, self-will, and love of the world these diffuse themselves throughout our thoughts, and mingle with our tempers. As roots of bitterness, they are continually springing up. We cannot number their fruits.

III. Multitudes enter the broad gate, and walk in this way of death. The majority of men and women, even in the most favored countries, are found in this broad way. Not the vulgar herd alone, but eminent men, the great of this world. They go in because the way is broad and seemingly secure. The way to heaven is narrow, so narrow, and so strait the gate, as to exclude all things unclean and unholy. The sinner must leave his sin in order to pass the gate. All sin, outward and inward.

IV. There are few who find the narrow way. Honesty, even of the heathen type, innocence of outward transgressions

are rare. Inward holiness is rarer still. The torrent of example endangers even these few. Evil example set by those who are in high places. The rich and great are often in this broad way. The narrowness and the difficulty, but especially the restraints imposed, repel the mass of men. Therefore our Lord's exhortation. Strive as in an agony. Many shall be unable to enter because they delayed too long. The day is past before they become alarmed. The night comes, and the door is shut. Therefore, strive now, to-day, and enter in. The method of entering pointed out.

SERMON XXXI.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE XI.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"*Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*"—MATT. vii. 13, 14.

1. OUR Lord, having warned us of the dangers which easily beset us at our first entrance upon real religion, the hinderances which naturally arise from within, from the wickedness of our own hearts; now proceeds to apprize us of the hinderances from without, particularly ill example and ill advice. By one or the other of these, thousands, who once ran well, have drawn back unto perdition;—yea, many of those who were not novices in religion, who had made some progress in righteousness. His caution, therefore, against these he presses upon us with all possible earnestness, and repeats again and again, in variety of expressions, lest by any means we should let it slip. Thus, effectually to guard us against the former, "Enter ye in," saith he, "at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it:" to secure us from the latter, "Beware," saith he, "of false prophets." We shall, at present, consider the former only.

2. "Enter ye in," saith our blessed Lord, "at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

3. In these words we may observe, first, the inseparable properties of the way to hell,—"wide is the gate, broad the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat:" secondly, the inseparable properties of the way to heaven,—"strait is that gate, and few there be that find it:" thirdly, a serious exhortation grounded thereon, "Enter ye in at the strait gate."

I. 1. We may observe, first, the inseparable properties of the way to hell: "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

2. Wide indeed is the gate, and broad the way, that leadeth to destruction! For sin is the gate of hell, and wickedness the way to destruction. And how wide a gate is that of sin! How broad is the way of wickedness! The "commandment" of God "is exceeding broad;" as extending not only to all our actions, but to every word which goeth out of our lips, yea, every thought that rises in our heart. And sin is equally broad with the commandment, seeing any breach of the commandment is sin. Yea, rather, it is a thousand times broader; since there is only one way of keeping the commandment; for we do not properly keep it, unless both the thing done, the manner of doing it, and all the other circumstances, are right; but there are a thousand ways of breaking every commandment: so that this gate is wide indeed.

3. To consider this a little more particularly: How wide do those parent-sins extend, from which all the rest derive their being;—that carnal mind which is enmity against God, pride of heart, self-will, and love of the world! Can we fix any bounds to them? Do

they not diffuse themselves through all our thoughts, and mingle with all our tempers? Are they not the leaven which leavens, more or less, the whole mass of our affections? May we not, on a close and faithful examination of ourselves, perceive these roots of bitterness continually springing up, infecting all our words, and tainting all our actions? And how innumerable an offspring do they bring forth, in every age and nation! Even enough to cover the whole earth with darkness and cruel habitations.

4. Oh, who is able to reckon up their accursed fruits; to count all the sins, whether against God or our neighbour, not which imagination might paint, but which may be matter of daily melancholy experience! Nor need we range over all the earth to find them. Survey any one kingdom, any single country, or city, or town; and how plenteous is this harvest! And let it not be one of those which are still overspread with Mohammedan or pagan darkness; but of those which name the name of Christ, which profess to see the light of his glorious gospel. Go no farther than the kingdom to which we belong, the city wherein we are now. We call ourselves Christians; yea, and that of the purest sort: we are Protestants! Reformed Christians! But, alas! who shall carry on the reformation of our opinions into our hearts and lives? Is there not a cause? For how innumerable are our sins; and those of the deepest dye! Do not the grossest abominations, of every kind, abound among us from day to day? Do not sins of every sort cover the land, as the waters cover the sea? Who can count them? Rather go and count the drops of rain, or the sands on the sea-shore. So "wide is the gate," so "broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction!"

5. "And many there are who go in at" that gate; many who walk in that way:—almost as many as go in at the gate of death, as sink into the chambers of the grave. For it cannot be denied, (though neither can we acknowledge it but with shame and sorrow of heart,) that even in this, which is called a Christian country

the generality of every age and sex, of every profession and employment, of every rank and degree, high and low, rich and poor, are walking in the way of destruction. The far greater part of the inhabitants of this city, to this day, live in sin; in some palpable, habitual, known transgression of the law they profess to observe; yea, in some outward transgression, some gross, visible kind of ungodliness or unrighteousness, some open violation of their duty, either to God or man. These then, none can deny, are all in the way that leadeth to destruction. Add to these, those who have a name indeed that they live, but were never yet alive to God; those that outwardly appear fair to men, but are inwardly full of all uncleanness; full of pride or vanity, of anger or revenge, of ambition or covetousness; lovers of themselves, lovers of the world, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. These, indeed, may be highly esteemed of men; but they are an abomination to the Lord. And how greatly will these saints of the world swell the number of the children of hell! Yea, add all, whatever they be in other respects, whether they have more or less of the form of godliness, who, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness" as the ground of their reconciliation to God and acceptance with him, of consequence have not "submitted themselves unto the righteousness which is of God" by faith. Now, all these things joined together in one, how terribly true is our Lord's assertion, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat!"

6. Nor does this only concern the vulgar herd,—the poor, base, stupid part of mankind. Men of eminence in the world, men who have many fields and yoke of oxen, do not desire to be excused from this. On the contrary, "many wise men after the flesh," according to the human methods of judging, "many mighty," in power, in courage, in riches, many "noble, are called;" called into the broad way, by the world, the flesh, and

the devil; and they are not disobedient to that calling. Yea, the higher they are raised in fortune and power, the deeper do they sink into wickedness. The more blessings they have received from God, the more sins do they commit; using their honour or riches, their learning or wisdom, not as means of working out their salvation, but rather of excelling in vice, and so insuring their own destruction.

II. 1 And the very reason why many of these go on so securely in the broad way, is because it is broad; not considering that this is the inseparable property of the way to destruction. "Many there be," saith our Lord, "which go in thereat;" for the very reason why they should flee from it; even "because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

2. This is an inseparable property of the way to heaven. So narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, unto life everlasting,—so strait the gate,—that nothing unclean, nothing unholy, can enter. No sinner can pass through that gate, until he is saved from all his sins Not only from his outward sins, from his evil "conversation received by tradition from his fathers." It will not suffice, that he hath "ceased to do evil," and "learned to do well;" he must not only be saved from all sinful actions, and from all evil and useless discourse; but inwardly changed, thoroughly renewed in the spirit of his mind; otherwise he cannot pass through the gate of life, he cannot enter into glory.

3. For, "narrow is the way that leadeth unto life;" the way of universal holiness. Narrow indeed is the way of poverty of spirit; the way of holy mourning; the way of meekness; and that of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Narrow is the way of mercifulness; of love unfeigned; the way of purity of heart; of doing good unto all men; and of gladly suffering evil, all manner of evil, for righteousness' sake.

4. "And few there be that find it." Alas! How

few find even the way of heathen honesty! How few are there that do nothing to another which they would not another should do unto them! How few that are clear before God, from acts either of injustice or unkindness! How few that do not "offend with their tongue!" that speak nothing unkind, nothing untrue! What a small proportion of mankind are innocent even of outward transgressions! And how much smaller a proportion have their hearts right before God,—clean and holy in his sight! Where are they whom his all-searching eye discerns to be truly humble; to abhor themselves in dust and ashes in the presence of God their Saviour; to be deeply and steadily serious, feeling their wants, and passing the time of their sojourning with fear; truly meek and gentle, never "overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good;" throughly athirst for God, and continually panting after a renewal in his likeness? How thinly are they scattered over the earth whose souls are enlarged in love to all mankind; and who love God with all their strength, who have given him their hearts, and desire nothing else in earth or heaven! How few are those lovers of God and man, that spend their whole strength in doing good unto all men; and are ready to suffer all things, yea, death itself, to save one soul from eternal death!

5. But while so few are found in the way of life, and so many in the way of destruction, there is great danger lest the torrent of example should bear us away with them. Even a single example, if it be always in our sight, is apt to make much impression upon us; especially when it has nature on its side, when it falls in with our own inclinations. How great then must be the force of so numerous examples, continually before our eyes; and all conspiring, together with our own hearts, to carry us down the stream of nature! How difficult must it be to stem the tide, and to keep "our selves unspotted in the world!"

6. What heightens the difficulty still more is, that they are not the rude and senseless part of mankind, at

least not these alone, who set us the example, who throng the downward way; but the polite, the well-bred, the genteel, the wise, the men who understand the world, the men of knowledge, of deep and various learning, the rational, the eloquent! These are all, or nearly all, against us. And how shall we stand against these? Do not their tongues drop manna, and have they not learned all the arts of soft persuasion?—and of reasoning too? for these are versed in all controversies, and strife of words. It is therefore a small thing with them to prove, that the way is *right*, because it is *broad*; that he who follows a multitude cannot do evil, but only he who will not follow them; that your way must be *wrong*, because it is *narrow*, and because there are so few that find it. These will make it clear to a demonstration, that evil is good, and good is evil; that the way of holiness is the way of destruction, and the way of the world the only way to heaven.

7. Oh, how can unlearned and ignorant men maintain their cause against such opponents? And yet these are not all with whom they must contend, however unequal to the task: for there are many mighty, and noble, and powerful men, as well as wise, in the road that leadeth to destruction; and these have a shorter way of confuting than that of reason and argument They usually apply, not to the understanding, but to the fears, of any that oppose them;—a method that seldom fails of success, even where argument profits nothing, as lying level to the capacities of all men; for all can fear, whether they can reason or no. And all who have not a firm trust in God, a sure reliance both on his power and love, cannot but fear to give any disgust to those who have the power of the world in their hands. What wonder, therefore, if the example of these is a law to all who know not God?

8. Many rich are likewise in the broad way. And these apply to the hopes of men, and to all their foolish desires, as strongly and effectually as the mighty and noble to their fears So that hardly can you hold on in

the way of the kingdom, unless you are dead to all below, unless you are crucified to the world, and the world crucified to you, unless you desire nothing more but God.

9. For how dark, how uncomfortable, how forbidding, is the prospect on the opposite side! A strait gate! a narrow way! and few finding that gate! few walking in the way! Besides, even those few are not wise men, not men of learning or eloquence. They are not able to reason either strongly or clearly: they cannot propose an argument to any advantage. They know not how to prove what they profess to believe; or to explain even what they say they experience. Surely such advocates as these will never recommend, but rather discredit, the cause they have espoused.

10. Add to this, that they are not noble, not honourable men: if they were, you might bear with their folly. They are men of no interest, no authority, of no account in the world. They are mean and base; low in life; and such as have no power, if they had the will, to hurt you. Therefore there is nothing at all to be feared from them. And there is nothing at all to hope; for the greater part of them may say, "Silver and gold have I none;" at least, a very moderate share. Nay, some of them have scarce food to eat, or raiment to put on. For this reason, as well as because their ways are not like those of other men, they are everywhere spoken against, are despised, have their names cast out as evil, are variously persecuted, and treated as the filth and off-scouring of the world So that both your fears, your hopes, and all your desires, (except those which you have immediately from God,) yea, all your natural passions, continually incline you to return into the broad way.

III. 1. Therefore it is that our Lord so earnestly exhorts, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Or, (as the same exhortation is elsewhere expressed,) "Strive to enter in:" Αγωνιζεσθε εισελθειν,—"strive as in an agony:" "For many," saith our Lord, "shall seek to enter in," indolently strive, "and shall not be able."

2. It is true, he intimates what may seem another reason for this, for their not being able to enter in, in the words which immediately follow these. For, after he had said, "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," he subjoins, "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, αρξησθε εξω εσταναι,—rather, *ye stand without*, for αρξησθε seems to be only an elegant expletive,—"and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us! he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Luke xiii. 24, &c.)

3. It may appear, upon a transient view of these words, that their delaying to seek at all, rather than their manner of seeking, was the reason why they were not able to enter in. But it comes, in effect, to the same thing. They were, therefore, commanded to depart, because they had been "workers of iniquity," because they had walked in the broad road; in other words, because they had not agonized to "enter in at the strait gate." Probably they did *seek*, before the door was shut; but that did not suffice: and they did *strive*, after the door was shut; but then it was too late.

4. Therefore strive ye now, in this your day, to "enter in at the strait gate." And, in order thereto, settle it in your heart, and let it be ever uppermost in your thoughts, that if you are in the broad way, you are in the way that leadeth to destruction. If many go with you, as sure as God is true, both they and you are going to hell! If you are walking as the generality of men walk, you are walking to the bottomless pit! Are many wise, many rich, many mighty, or noble, travelling with you in the same way? By this token, without going any farther, you know it does not lead to life. Here is a short, a plain, an infallible rule, before you enter into particulars. In whatever profession you are engaged, you must be singular, or be damned! The way to hell has nothing singular in it; but the way to heaven is singularity all over. If you move but

one step towards God, you are not as other men are. But regard not this. It is far better to stand alone, than to fall into the pit. Run, then, with patience the race which is set before thee, though thy companions therein are but few. They will not always be so. Yet a little while, and thou wilt "come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

5 Now, then, "strive to enter in at the strait gate," being penetrated with the deepest sense of the inexpressible danger your soul is in, so long as you are in a broad way,—so long as you are void of poverty of spirit, and all that inward religion, which the many, the rich, the wise, account madness. "Strive to enter in;" being pierced with sorrow and shame for having so long run on with the unthinking crowd, utterly neglecting, if not despising, that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord." Strive, as in an agony of holy fear, lest "a promise being made you of entering into his rest," even that "rest which remaineth for the people of God," you should nevertheless "come short of it." Strive, in all the fervour of desire, with "groanings which cannot be uttered." Strive by prayer without ceasing; at all times, in all places, lifting up your heart to God, and giving him no rest, till you "awake up after his likeness," and are "satisfied" with it.

6. To conclude. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," not only by this agony of soul, of conviction, of sorrow, of shame, of desire, of fear, of unceasing prayer; but likewise by ordering thy conversation aright, by walking with all thy strength in all the ways of God, the way of innocence, of piety, and of mercy. Abstain from all appearance of evil; do all possible good to all men; deny thyself, thy own will, in all things, and take up thy cross daily. Be ready to cut off thy right hand, to pluck out thy right eye, and cast it from thee; to suffer the loss of goods, friends, health, all things on earth, so thou mayest enter into the kingdom of heaven.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXI.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) Of what hinderances are we here apprised?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What does our Lord say here?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What do we first observe in these words? Secondly? Thirdly?

Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is the first observation?

Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What is sin? Wickedness?

Ques. 6. (I. 3.) What is said of parent sins?

Ques. 7. (I. 4.) What is said of their accursed fruits?

Ques. 8. (I. 5.) Do many go in at this gate?

Ques. 9. (I. 6.) Does this concern only the vulgar herd?

Ques 10. (II. 1.) What reason is here given?

Ques. 11. (II. 2.) What is a property of the way to heaven?

Ques. 12. (II. 3.) What is said of heathen honesty?

Ques. 14. (II. 4.) What danger is here pointed out?

Ques. 15. (II. 5.) Is it difficult to resist?

Ques. 16. (II. 6.) What heightens this difficulty?

Ques. 17. (II. 7.) Why are unlearned and ignorant men at a disadvantage? Are these mighty and noble and wise men in the road to destruction? In using these terms, we speak "after the manner of men."

Ques. 18. (II. 8.) How does the fact that many rich men are in this broad way affect the question?

Ques. 19. (II. 9.) Why does the strait gate or the narrow way render the prospect forbidding? Does the advocacy of unlearned men discredit their testimony to the truth?

Ques. 20. (II. 10.) What is said of noble and honorable men?

Ques. 21. (III. 1.) For these reasons what does our Lord earnestly exhort us to do?

Ques. 22. (III. 2.) What other reason does he give.

Ques. 23. (III. 3.) What may appear upon a transient view of these words?

Ques. 24. (III. 4.) What duty is required of us to-day?

Ques. 25. (III. 5.) How should we realize the danger in which the soul is placed?

Ques. 26. (III. 6.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XXXII.

ANALYSIS.

I. Men rush on to destruction simply because the way is broad. Therefore God commands the watchman to warn men. To this end he has commissioned his servants through many generations. But the watchman may fall into a snare. There are many instances of this. Our Lord warns us against them. The caution is of the utmost importance.

II. Therefore we inquire first who the false prophets are. They are men who speak for God. Teachers who profess to be sent by him. But they teach a false way to heaven. Every broad way is a false one. The true way is narrow. Only those are true who teach the way pointed out in the preceding sermon. No matter what the way may be called no matter how many good words may be used, unless the way is that of holiness, mourning, meekness, holy desire, love of God and our neighbor, doing good and suffering for Christ's sake, it is not the true way.

III. Those who speak evil of the true way are under greater condemnation, especially those who teach the way that is directly opposite—the way of pride, of levity, of passion, worldly desire, loving pleasure more than God, unkindness to our neighbor, unconcern for good works, suffering no evil and no persecution for righteousness' sake. Many do teach this opposite way.

IV. But not in their proper shape do they come. Men would be alarmed, and flee from them. Therefore, they assume the garb of true prophets. They come in sheep's clothing. They come with an appearance of usefulness, with

the appearance of religion; above all, with the appearance of love.

V. How may we know them, notwithstanding their disguise? This forms the third inquiry. Our Lord gives us a short and plain rule. "Ye shall know them by their fruits." But what are the fruits? What effect has their doctrine on their own lives? Are they unblamable? Upon their hearts? Are their tempers holy, heavenly, divine? Have they the mind of Christ? Are they lowly, meek, patient lovers of God and man, zealous of good works? Do they walk as Christ walked?

VI. Our Lord declares that we do not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Unless the moral nature is regenerated and conformed to the will of God the lives of men will not harmonize with the teaching of the gospel. Of these false teachers we must beware. The evils of listening to them pointed out, and the case of those who are placed under their ministry considered. Rules given for determining a course of action under certain circumstances. Address to false prophets themselves

SERMON XXXII.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE XII.

"*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*
"*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*
"*Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*
"*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*
"*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*
"*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*"—MATT. vii. 15—20.

1. IT is scarce possible to express or conceive what multitudes of souls run on to destruction, because they would not be persuaded to walk in a *narrow* way, even though it were the way to everlasting salvation And the same thing we may still observe daily. Such is the folly and madness of mankind, that thousands of men still rush on in the way to hell, only because it is a *broad* way. They walk in it themselves, because others do: because so many perish, they will add to the number. Such is the amazing influence of example over the weak, miserable children of men! It continually peoples the regions of death, and drowns numberless souls in everlasting perdition.

2. To warn mankind of this, to guard as many as possible against this spreading contagion, God has commanded his watchmen to cry aloud, and show the people the danger they are in. For this end he has sent his servants, the Prophets, in their succeeding generations, to point out the narrow path, and exhort all men not

to be conformed to this world. But what, if the watchmen themselves fall into the snare against which they should warn others? What, if "the Prophets prophesy deceits?" if they "cause the people to err from the way?" What shall be done, if they point out, as the way to eternal life, what is in truth the way to eternal death; and exhort others to walk, as they do themselves, in the broad, not the narrow way?

3. Is this an unheard-of, is it an uncommon thing? Nay, God knoweth it is not. The instances of it are almost innumerable. We may find them in every age and nation. But how terrible is this!—when the ambassadors of God turn agents for the devil!—when they who are commissioned to teach men the way to heaven do in fact teach them the way to hell! These are like the locusts of Egypt; "which eat up the residue that had escaped, that had remained after the hail." They devour even the residue of men that had escaped, that were not destroyed by ill example. It is not, therefore, without cause, that our wise and gracious Master so solemnly cautions us against them: "Beware," saith he, "of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

4. A caution this of the utmost importance.—That it may the more effectually sink into our hearts, let us inquire, first, who these false prophets are: secondly, what appearance they put on: and, thirdly, how we may know what they really are, notwithstanding their fair appearance.

I. 1. We are, first, to inquire who these false prophets are. And this it is needful to do the more diligently, because these very men have so laboured to "wrest this scripture to their own," though not only their own, "destruction." In order, therefore, to cut off all dispute, I shall raise no dust, (as the manner of some is,) neither use any loose, rhetorical exclamations, to deceive the hearts of the simple; but speak rough, plain truths, such as none can deny who has understanding or modesty left, and such truths as have the closest connection with the whole tenour of the preceding discourse: whereas too

many have interpreted these words without any regard to all that went before; as if they bore no manner of relation to the sermon in the close of which they stand.

2. By *prophets* here (as in many other passages of Scripture, particularly in the New Testament) are meant, not those who foretell things to come, but those who speak in the name of God; those men who profess to be sent of God, to teach others the way to heaven.

Those are *false* prophets who teach a false way to heaven, a way which does not lead thither; or, (which comes in the end to the same point,) who do not teach the true.

3. Every broad way is infallibly a false one. Therefore this is one plain, sure rule: "They who teach men to walk in a broad way, a way that many walk in, are false prophets."

Again: The true way to heaven is a narrow way. Therefore this is another plain, sure rule: "They who do not teach men to walk in a narrow way, to be singular, are false prophets."

4. To be more particular. The only true way to heaven is that pointed out in the preceding sermon. Therefore they are false prophets who do not teach men to walk in this way.

Now the way to heaven pointed out in the preceding sermon is the way of lowliness, mourning, meekness, and holy desire, love of God and of our neighbour, doing good, and suffering evil for Christ's sake. They are, therefore, false prophets who teach as the way to heaven any other way than this.

5. It matters not what they call that other way. They may call it faith; or good works; or faith and works; or repentance; or repentance, faith, and new obedience. All these are good words: but if, under these, or any other terms whatever, they teach men any way distinct from this, they are properly false prophets.

6. How much more do they fall under that condemnation, who speak evil of this good way; but above all, they who teach the directly opposite way, the way of pride, of levity, of passion, of worldly desires, of loving

pleasure more than God, of unkindness to our neighbour, of unconcern for good works, and suffering no evil, no persecution, for righteousness' sake!

7. If it be asked, "Why, who ever did teach this, or who does teach it, as the way to heaven?" I answer, Ten thousand wise and honourable men; even all those, of whatever denomination, who encourage the proud, the trifler, the passionate, the lover of the world, the man of pleasure, the unjust or unkind, the easy, careless, harmless, useless creature, the man who suffers no reproach for righteousness' sake, to imagine he is in the way to heaven. These are false prophets in the highest sense of the word. These are traitors both to God and man. These are no other than the first-born of Satan; the eldest sons of Apollyon, the destroyer. These are far above the rank of ordinary cut-throats; for they murder the souls of men. They are continually peopling the realms of night; and whenever they follow the poor souls whom they have destroyed, "hell shall be moved from beneath to meet them at their coming."

II. 1. But do they come now in their own shape? By no means. If it were so, they could not destroy. You would take the alarm, and flee for your life. Therefore they put on a quite contrary appearance: (which was the second thing to be considered:) "they come to you in sheep's clothing, although inwardly they are ravening wolves."

2. "They come to you in sheep's clothing;" that is, with an appearance of harmlessness. They come in the most mild, inoffensive manner, without any mark or token of enmity. Who can imagine that these quiet creatures would do any hurt to any one? Perhaps they may not be so zealous and active in doing good as one would wish they were. However, you see no reason to suspect that they have even the desire to do any harm. But this is not all.

3. They come, secondly, with an appearance of usefulness. Indeed to this, to do good, they are particularly called. They are set apart for this very thing

They are particularly commissioned to watch over your soul, and to train you up to eternal life. It is their whole business, to "go about doing good, and healing those that are oppressed of the devil." And you have been always accustomed to look upon them in this light, as messengers of God, sent to bring you a blessing.

4. They come, thirdly, with an appearance of religion. All they do is for conscience' sake! They assure you it is out of mere zeal for God, that they are making God a liar. It is out of pure concern for religion, that they would destroy it, root and branch. All they speak is only from a love of truth, and a fear lest it should suffer; and, it may be, from a regard for the church, and a desire to defend her from all her enemies.

5. Above all, they come with an appearance of love. They take all these pains only for *your* good. They should not trouble themselves about you, but that they have a kindness for you. They will make large professions of their good-will, of their concern for the danger you are in, and of their earnest desire to preserve you from error, from being entangled in new and mischievous doctrines. They should be very sorry to see one who *means* so well, hurried into any extreme, perplexed with strange and unintelligible notions, or deluded into enthusiasm. Therefore it is that they advise you to keep still in the plain middle way; and to beware of "being righteous over much," lest you should "destroy yourself."

III. 1. But how may we know what they really are, notwithstanding their fair appearance? This was the third thing into which it was proposed to inquire. Our blessed Lord saw how needful it was for all men to know false prophets, however disguised. He saw, likewise, how unable most men were to deduce a truth through a long train of consequences. He therefore gives us a short and plain rule, easy to be understood by men of the meanest capacities, and easy to be applied upon all occasions: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

2. Upon all occasions you may easily apply this rule

In order to know whether any who speak in the name of God are false or true prophets, it is easy to observe, first, What are the fruits of their doctrine as to themselves? What effect has it had upon their lives? Are they holy and unblamable in all things? What effect has it had upon their hearts? Does it appear by the general tenor of their conversation that their tempers are holy, heavenly, divine? that the mind is in them which was in Christ Jesus? that they are meek, lowly, patient, lovers of God and man, and zealous of good works?

3. You may easily observe, secondly, what are the fruits of their doctrine as to those that hear them;—in many, at least, though not in all; for the apostles themselves did not convert all that heard them. Have these the mind that was in Christ? And do they walk as He also walked? And was it by hearing these men that they began so to do? Were they inwardly and outwardly wicked till they heard them? If so, it is a manifest proof that those are true prophets, teachers sent of God. But if it is not so, if they do not effectually teach either themselves or others to love and serve God, it is a manifest proof that they are false prophets: that God hath not sent them.

4. A hard saying this! How few can bear it! This our Lord was sensible of, and therefore condescends to prove it at large, by several clear and convincing arguments. "Do men," says he, "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Verse 16.) Do you expect that these evil men should bring forth good fruit? As well might you expect that thorns should bring forth grapes, or that figs should grow upon thistles! "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Verse 17.) Every true prophet, every teacher whom I have sent, bringeth forth the good fruit of holiness. But a false prophet, a teacher whom I have not sent, brings forth only sin and wickedness. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." A true prophet, a teacher sent from God, does not bring forth good fruit sometimes only, but always; not acci-

dentally, but by a kind of necessity. In like manner, a false prophet, one whom God hath not sent, does not bring forth evil fruit accidentally, or sometimes only, but always, and of necessity. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Verse 19.) Such infallibly will be the lot of those prophets who bring not forth good fruit, who do not save souls from sin, who do not bring sinners to repentance. "Wherefore," let this stand as an eternal rule, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Verse 20.) They who, in fact, bring the proud, passionate, unmerciful, lovers of the world, to be lowly, gentle, lovers of God and man,—they are true prophets; they are sent from God, who therefore confirms their word. On the other hand, they whose hearers, if unrighteous before, remain unrighteous still, or, at least, void of any righteousness which "exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,"—they are false prophets; they are not sent of God; therefore their word falls to the ground: and, without a miracle of grace, they and their hearers together will fall into the bottomless pit!

5. Oh, "beware of these false prophets!" For though they "come in sheep's clothing, yet inwardly they are ravening wolves." They only destroy and devour the flock: they tear them in pieces, if there is none to help them. They will not, cannot, lead you in the way to heaven. How should they, when they know it not themselves? Oh, beware they do not turn you out of the way, and cause you to "lose what you have wrought!"

6. But perhaps you will ask, "If there is such danger in hearing them, ought I to hear them at all?" It is a weighty question, such as deserves the deepest consideration, and ought not to be answered but upon the calmest thought, the most deliberate reflection. For many years I have been almost afraid to speak at all concerning it; being unable to determine one way or the other, or to give any judgment upon it. Many reasons there are which readily occur, and incline me to say, "Hear them not." And yet what our Lord speaks concerning the false prophets of his own times seems

to imply the contrary: "Then spake Jesus unto the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat,"—are the ordinary, stated teachers in your church; "all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." Now, that these were false prophets in the highest sense, our Lord hath shown during the whole course of his ministry; as indeed he does in those very words, "They say, and do not." Therefore, by their fruits his disciples could not but know them, seeing they were open to the view of all men. Accordingly, he warns them again and again, to beware of these false prophets. And yet he does not forbid them to hear even these: nay, he, in effect, commands them so to do, in those words, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do:" for unless they heard them, they could not know, much less observe, whatsoever they bade them do. Here then our Lord himself gives a plain direction, both to his apostles and the whole multitude, in some circumstances, to hear even false prophets, known and acknowledged so to be.

7. But perhaps it will be said, "He only directed to hear them when they read the Scripture to the congregation." I answer, At the same time that they thus read the Scripture, they generally expounded it too. And here is no kind of intimation that they were to hear the one, and not the other also. Nay, the very terms, "All things whatsoever they bid you observe," exclude any such limitation.

8. Again: Unto them, unto false prophets, undeniably such, is frequently committed (oh, grief to speak! for surely these things ought not so to be) the administration of the sacrament also. To direct men, therefore, not to hear them, would be, in effect, to cut them off from the ordinance of God. But this we dare not do: considering the validity of the ordinance doth not depend on the goodness of him that administers, but on the faithfulness of Him that ordained it; who will and doth meet us in his appointed ways. Therefore, on this account, like-

wise, I scruple to say, Hear not even the false prophets. Even by these who are under a curse themselves, God can and doth give us his blessing. For the bread which they break, we have experimentally known to be "the communion of the body of Christ:" and the cup which God blessed, even by their unhallowed lips, was to us the communion of the blood of Christ.

9. All, therefore, which I can say is this: In any particular case, wait upon God by humble and earnest prayer, and then act according to the best light you have: act according to what you are persuaded, upon the whole, will be most for your spiritual advantage. Take great care that you do not judge rashly; that you do not lightly think any to be false prophets: and when you have full proof, see that no anger or contempt have any place in your heart. After this, in the presence and in the fear of God, determine for yourself. I can only say, if by experience you find that the hearing them hurts your soul, then hear them not; then quietly refrain, and hear those that profit you. If, on the other hand, you find it does not hurt your soul, you then may hear them still. Only, "take heed how you hear:" beware of them and of their doctrine. Hear with fear and trembling, lest you should be deceived, and given up, like them, to a strong delusion. As they continually mingle truth and lies, how easily may you take in both together! Hear with fervent and continual prayer to Him who alone teacheth man wisdom. And see that you bring whatever you hear "to the law and to the testimony." Receive nothing untried, nothing till it is weighed in the balance of the sanctuary: believe nothing they say, unless it is clearly confirmed by passages of holy writ. Wholly reject whatsoever differs therefrom, whatever is not confirmed thereby. And, in particular, reject, with the utmost abhorrence, whatsoever is described as the way of salvation, that is either different from, or short of, the way our Lord has marked out in the foregoing discourse.

10. I cannot conclude without addressing a few plain words to those of whom we have now been speaking

O ye false prophets! O ye dry bones! hear ye, for once, the word of the Lord! How long will ye lie in the name of God, saying, "God hath spoken!" and God hath not spoken by you? How long will ye pervert the right ways of the Lord, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness? How long will ye teach the way of death, and call it the way of life? How long will ye deliver to Satan the souls whom ye profess to bring unto God?

11. "Wo unto you, ye blind leaders of the blind; for ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men. Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Them that would "strive to enter in at the strait gate," ye call back into the broad way. Them that have scarce gone one step in the ways of God, you devilishly caution against going too far. Them that just begin to "hunger and thirst after righteousness," you warn not to "be righteous overmuch." Thus you cause them to stumble at the very threshold; yea, to fall and rise no more. Oh, wherefore do ye this? What profit is there in their blood, when they go down to the pit? Miserable profit to you! "They shall perish in their iniquity; but their blood will God require at your hands!"

12. Where are your eyes! Where is your understanding? Have ye deceived others, till you have deceived yourselves also? Who hath required this at your hands, to teach a way which ye never knew? Are you "given up to" so "strong a delusion," that ye not only teach but "believe a lie?" And can you possibly believe that God hath sent you? that ye are his messengers? Nay, if the Lord had sent you, the work of the Lord would prosper in your hand. As the Lord liveth, if ye were messengers of God, he would "confirm the word of his messengers." But the work of the Lord doth not prosper in your hand: you bring no sinners to repentance. The Lord doth not confirm your word; for you save no souls from death.

13. How can you possibly evade the force of our Lord's words,—so full, so strong, so express? How

can ye evade knowing yourselves by your fruits,—evil fruits of evil trees? And how should it be otherwise? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Take this to yourselves, ye to whom it belongs! O ye barren trees, why cumber ye the ground? "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." See ye not, that there is no exception? Take knowledge, then, ye are not good trees; for ye do not bring forth good fruit. "But a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit;" and so have ye done from the beginning. Your speaking, as from God, has only confirmed them that heard you in the tempers, if not works, of the devil. Oh, take warning of Him in whose name ye speak, before the sentence he hath pronounced take place: "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

14. My dear brethren, harden not your hearts! You have too long shut your eyes against the light. Open them now before it is too late; before you are cast into outer darkness! Let not any temporal consideration weigh with you; for eternity is at stake. Ye have run before ye were sent. Oh, go no farther! Do not persist to damn yourselves and them that hear you! You have no fruit of your labours. And why is this? Even because the Lord is not with you. But can you go this warfare at your own cost? It cannot be. Then humble yourselves before him. Cry unto him out of the dust, that he may first quicken *thy* soul; give *thee* the faith that worketh by love; that is lowly and meek, pure and merciful, zealous of good works, rejoicing in tribulation, in reproach, in distress, in persecution for righteousness' sake! So shall "the Spirit of glory and of Christ rest upon thee," and it shall appear that God hath sent thee. So shalt thou indeed "do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry." So shall the word of God in thy mouth be "a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces!" It shall then be known by thy fruits that thou art a prophet of the Lord, even by the children whom God hath given thee. And having "turned many to righteousness," thou shalt "shine as the stars for ever and ever!"

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is the first remark here made?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) How is this contagion guarded against?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Of what are there innumerable instances?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What three inquiries are here proposed?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is the first inquiry?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What is here meant by prophets?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What is said of every broad way to heaven?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) What is the only true way?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) Does it matter what the false way is called?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) Who are said to be under greater condemnation?

Ques. 11. (I. 7.) Do any now teach any of these false ways?

Ques. 12. (II. 1.) Do false prophets come in their own garb?

Ques. 13. (II. 2.) What is meant here by "sheep's clothing?"

Ques. 14. (II. 3.) What is the second characteristic?

Ques. 15. (II. 4.) What is the third?

Ques. 16. (II. 5.) What is mentioned as the chief one?

Ques. 17. (III. 1.) How can they be discovered?

Ques. 18. (III. 2.) When can this rule be applied?

Ques. 19. (III. 3.) What may be observed, secondly?

Ques. 20. (III. 4.) What is this saying called?

Ques 21. (III. 5.) What do these false prophets do?

Ques. 22. (III. 6.) What question is here propounded?

Ques. 23. (III. 7.) What is here stated as the effect of refusing to hear them? What does this mean? *Ans.* Mr. Wesley here refers to those notoriously wicked or ungodly, unconverted men who occupied places in the established Church

of England. As they were placed in the pulpit without the consent of the people, so there was no way of getting rid of them when they were in possession of their "livings." As there were only a few ordained ministers among the Methodists at that time, the people were compelled to receive the sacraments from unconverted men, or not at all. Of course these circumstances do not exist at this time in England.

Ques 24 (III. 9.) What case does he state here?

Ques. 25. (III. 10.) How does he address the false prophets?

Ques. 26. (III. 10-14.) Ought we not to examine ourselves, and see if we are truly sincere in our profession, and consistent in our walk and conversation with it?

SERMON XXXIII.

ANALYSIS.

I. Having declared the whole counsel of God concerning the way of salvation, our Lord proceeds to classify the hearers of the word. Those who hear, but do not, and those who obey his word are described under the figure of a builder. One class build upon a foundation of sand; the other upon a rock.

II. The builder on the sand. It is of him that our Lord says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is necessary to understand these words. Going to heaven by any other way than he has pointed out. All merely verbal religion. Whatever creeds may be rehearsed, or professions made, or prayers offered, if there be no more than these, no effect upon the heart, manifesting itself in a holy life. Even the negative state of doing no harm, freedom from presumptuous or outward wickedness. Further, the doing of good works, so called, obedience to the rules of Church life and organization, such as attendance upon the ordinances of the Lord's house. Even when these things are done with a desire to please God, and with the belief that he is pleased thereby, all this falls far short of the righteousness required in the preceding discourse.

III. Unless the kingdom of God is within, the house is built upon the sand. But the wise builder is poor in spirit. He sees and feels his guilt. Conscious of his lost estate, he trusts to nothing he has done or can do to re-instate himself in the favor of God. He is meek, gentle, patient to-

ward all men. His soul is athirst for God. He loves all mankind, and is willing to lay down his life for his enemies. He loves God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. He doeth good unto all men, as he has opportunity. He is truly wise, because he knows himself, the world, and God his Father and Friend.

IV. Although he is at peace with God, he is at war with all that is unholy. He must be tried in the fire, by temptation, affliction, persecution. The rain will descend in torrents, but his house will stand, because it is built upon a rock.

V. These things concern every child of man. To examine the foundation of hope. The false hopes of men arraigned and tried in the balance. Exhortation to all to build upon the Rock.

SERMON XXXIII.

UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

DISCOURSE XIII.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."—MATT. vii. 21–27.

1. OUR Divine Teacher, having declared the whole counsel of God with regard to the way of salvation, and observed the chief hinderances of those who desire to walk therein, now closes the whole with these weighty words; thereby, as it were, setting his seal to his prophecy, and impressing his whole authority on what he had delivered, that it might stand firm to all generations.

2. For thus saith the Lord, that none may ever conceive there is any other way than this, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

3. I design, in the following discourse, first, to consider the case of him who thus builds his house upon the sand: secondly, to show the wisdom of him who builds upon a rock: and, thirdly, to conclude with a practical application.

I. 1. And, first, I am to consider the case of him who builds his house upon the sand. It is concerning him our Lord saith, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." And this is a decree which cannot pass; which standeth fast for ever and ever. It therefore imports us, in the highest degree, thoroughly to understand the force of these words. Now what are we to understand by that expression, "That saith unto me, Lord, Lord?" It undoubtedly means, *that thinks of going to heaven by any other way than that which I have now described.* It therefore implies (to begin at the lowest point) all good words, all verbal religion.—It includes whatever creeds we may rehearse, whatever professions of faith we make, whatever number of prayers we may repeat, whatever thanksgivings we read or say to God. We may speak good of his name, and declare his loving-kindness to the children of men. We may be talking of all his mighty

acts, and telling of his salvation from day to day. By comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we may show the meaning of the oracles of God. We may explain the mysteries of his kingdom, which have been hid from the beginning of the world. We may speak with the tongue of angels, rather than men, concerning the deep things of God. We may proclaim to sinners, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" Yea, we may do this with such a measure of the power of God, and such demonstration of his Spirit, as to save many souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins. And yet it is very possible, all this may be no more than saying, "Lord, Lord." After I have thus successfully preached to others, still I myself may be a castaway. I may, in the hand of God, snatch many souls from hell, and yet drop into it when I have done. I may bring many others to the kingdom of heaven, and yet myself never enter there. Reader, if God hath ever blessed my word to *thy* soul, pray that he may be merciful to *me* a sinner!

2. The saying, "Lord, Lord," may, secondly, imply the doing no harm. We may abstain from every presumptuous sin, from every kind of outward wickedness. We may refrain from all those ways of acting or speaking which are forbidden in holy writ. We may be able to say to all those among whom we live, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" We may have a conscience void of any external offence, towards God and towards man. We may be clear of all uncleanness, ungodliness, and unrighteousness, as to the outward act; or, (as the apostle testifies concerning himself,) "touching the righteousness of the law," that is, outward righteousness, "blameless." But yet we are not hereby justified. Still this is no more than saying, "Lord, Lord;" and if we go no farther than this, we shall never "enter into the kingdom of heaven."

3. The saying, "Lord, Lord," may imply, thirdly, many of what are usually styled good works. A man

may attend the supper of the Lord, may hear abundance of excellent sermons, and omit no opportunity of partaking all the other ordinances of God. I may do good to my neighbour, deal my bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with a garment. I may be so zealous of good works as even to "give all my goods to feed the poor." Yea, and I may do all this with a desire to please God, and a real belief that I do please him thereby; (which is undeniably the case of those our Lord introduces, saying unto him, "Lord, Lord;") and still I may have no part in the glory which shall be revealed.

4. If any man marvels at this, let him acknowledge he is a stranger to the whole religion of Jesus Christ; and, in particular, to that perfect portraiture thereof which he has set before us in this discourse. For how far short is all this of that righteousness and true holiness which he has described therein? How widely distant from that inward kingdom of heaven which is now opened in the believing soul,—which is first sown in the heart as a grain of mustard-seed, but afterwards putteth forth great branches, on which grow all the fruits of righteousness, every good temper, and word, and work.

5. Yet as clearly as he had declared this, as frequently as he had repeated, that none who have not this kingdom of God within them shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; our Lord well knew, that many would not receive this saying, and therefore confirms it yet again: "Many" (saith he: not one; not a few only; it is not a rare or an uncommon case) "shall say unto me in that day," not only, We have said many prayers: We have spoken thy praise: We have refrained from evil: We have exercised ourselves in doing good;—but, what is abundantly more than this, "We have prophesied in thy name; in thy name have we cast out devils; in thy name done many wonderful works." "We have prophesied;—we have declared thy will to mankind;" we have showed sinners the way to peace and glory. And

we have done this "in thy name," according to the truth of thy gospel; yea, and by thy authority, who didst confirm the word with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. For in or by thy name, by the power of thy word and of thy Spirit, "have we cast out devils;" out of the souls which they had long claimed as their own, and whereof they had full and quiet possession. "And in thy name," by thy power, not our own, "have we done many wonderful works;" insomuch that "even the dead heard the voice of the Son of God" speaking by us, and lived. "And then will I profess" even "unto them, I never knew you;" no, not then, when you were "casting out devils in my name;" even then I did not know you as my own; for your heart was not right toward God. Ye were not yourselves meek and lowly; ye were not lovers of God and of all mankind; ye were not renewed in the image of God; ye were not holy as I am holy. "Depart from me, ye" who, notwithstanding all this, are "workers of iniquity;"—ανομια: ye are transgressors of my law, my law of holy and perfect love.

6. It is to put this beyond all possibility of contradiction, that our Lord confirms it by that apposite comparison: "Every one," saith he, "who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;"—as they will surely do, sooner or later, upon every soul of man; even the floods of outward affliction, or inward temptation; the storms of pride, anger, fear, or desire;—"and it fell: and great was the fall of it;" so that it perished for ever and ever. Such must be the portion of all who rest in any thing short of that religion which is above described. And the greater will their fall be because they "heard those sayings, and" yet "did them not."

II. 1. I am, secondly, to show the wisdom of him that doeth them, that buildeth his house upon a rock. He indeed is wise, "who doeth the will of my Father

which is in heaven." He is truly wise, whose righteousness exceeds "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." He is poor in spirit; knowing himself even as also he is known. He sees and feels all his sin, and all his guilt, till it is washed away by the atoning blood He is conscious of his lost estate, of the wrath of God abiding on him, and of his utter inability to help himself, till he is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is meek and gentle, patient toward all men, never "returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing," till he overcomes evil with good. His soul is athirst for nothing on earth, but only for God, the living God. He has bowels of love for all mankind, and is ready to lay down his life for his enemies. He loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength. He alone shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, who, in this spirit, doeth good unto all men, and who, being for this cause despised and rejected of men, being hated, reproached, and persecuted, rejoices and is "exceeding glad," knowing in whom he hath believed, and being assured these light, momentary afflictions will "work out for him an eternal weight of glory."

2. How truly wise is this man! He knows himself;—an everlasting spirit, which came forth from God, and was sent down into a house of clay, not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He knows the world;—the place in which he is to pass a few days or years, not as an inhabitant, but as a stranger and sojourner, in his way to the everlasting habitations; and accordingly he uses the world as not abusing it, and as knowing the fashion of it passes away. He knows God;—his Father and his Friend, the parent of all good, the centre of the spirits of all flesh, the sole happiness of all intelligent beings. He sees clearer than the light of the noonday sun, that this is the end of man, to glorify Him who made him for himself, and to love and enjoy him for ever. And with equal clearness he sees the means to that end, to the enjoyment of God in

glory; even now to know, to love, to imitate God, and to believe in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

3. He is a wise man, even in God's account; for "he buildeth his house upon a rock;" upon the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Fitly is he so called; for he changeth not: he is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." To him both the man of God of old, and the apostle citing his words, bear witness: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." (Heb. i. 10–12.) Wise, therefore, is the man who buildeth on Him; who layeth Him for his only foundation; who builds only upon his blood and righteousness, upon what he hath done and suffered for us. On this corner-stone he fixes his faith, and rests the whole weight of his soul upon it. He is taught of God to say, "Lord, I have sinned! I deserve the nethermost hell; but I am justified freely by thy grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and the life I now live, I live by faith in him who loved me, and gave himself for me:—the life I now live; namely, a divine, heavenly life; a life which is hid with Christ in God. I now live, even in the flesh, a life of love; of pure love both to God and man; a life of holiness and happiness; praising God, and doing all things to his glory."

4. Yet let not such an one think that he shall not see war any more; that he is now out of the reach of temptation. It still remains for God to prove the grace he hath given: he shall be tried as gold in the fire. He shall be tempted not less than they who know not God: perhaps abundantly more; for Satan will not fail to try to the uttermost those whom he is not able to destroy. Accordingly, "the rain" will impetuously descend; only at such times and in such a manner

as seems good, not to the prince of the power of the air, but to him "whose kingdom ruleth over all." "The floods," or torrents, will come; they will lift up their waves and rage horribly. But to them also, the Lord that sitteth above the water-floods, that remaineth a King for ever, will say, "Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther: here shall your proud waves be stayed." "The winds will blow and beat upon that house," as though they would tear it up from the foundation: but they cannot prevail: it falleth not; for it is founded upon a rock. He buildeth on Christ by faith and love; therefore, he shall not be cast down. He "shall not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea." "Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same;" still he "dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, and is safe under the shadow of the Almighty."

III. 1. How nearly, then, does it concern every child of man, practically to apply these things to himself! diligently to examine on what foundation he builds, whether on a rock or on the sand! How deeply are *you* concerned to inquire, "What is the foundation of *my* hope? Whereon do I build my expectation of entering into the kingdom of heaven? Is it not built on the sand? upon my *orthodoxy*, or right opinions, which, by a gross abuse of words, I have called *faith?* upon my having a set of notions, suppose more rational or scriptural than others have?" Alas! what madness is this! Surely this is building on the sand, or, rather, on the froth of the sea! Say, I am convinced of this: "Am I not, again, building my hope on what is equally unable to support it? Perhaps on my belonging to 'so excellent a Church; reformed after the true scripture model; blessed with the purest doctrine, the most primitive Liturgy, the most apostolical form of government!' These are, doubtless, so many reasons for praising God, as they may be so many helps to holiness: but they are not holiness itself: and if they are separate from it, they

will profit me nothing; nay, they will leave me the more without excuse, and exposed to the greater damnation. Therefore, if I build my hope upon this foundation, I am still building upon the sand."

2. You cannot, you dare not, rest here. Upon what next will you build your hope of salvation?—upon your innocence? upon your doing no harm? your not wronging or hurting any one? Well; allow this plea to be true. You are just in all your dealings; you are a downright honest man; you pay every man his own; you neither cheat nor extort; you act fairly with all mankind; and you have a conscience towards God; you do not live in any known sin. Thus far is well; but still it is not the thing. You may go thus far, and yet never come to heaven. When all this harmlessness flows from a right principle, it is the *least part* of the religion of Christ. But in you it does not flow from a right principle, and therefore is no part at all of religion. So that in grounding your hope of salvation on this, you are still building upon the sand.

3. Do you go farther yet? Do you add to the doing no harm, the attending all the ordinances of God? Do you, at all opportunities, partake of the Lord's supper? use public and private prayer? fast often? hear and search the Scriptures, and meditate thereon? These things, likewise, ought you to have done, from the time you first set your face towards heaven. Yet these things also are nothing, being alone. They are nothing without "the weightier matters of the law." And those you have forgotten; at least, you experience them not; —faith, mercy, and the love of God; holiness of heart; heaven opened in the soul. Still, therefore, you build upon the sand.

4. Over and above all this, are you zealous of good works? Do you, as you have time, do good to all men? Do you feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction? Do you visit those that are sick? relieve them that are in prison? Is any a stranger, and you take him in? Friend, come

up higher! Do you "prophesy" in the "name" of Christ? Do you preach the truth as it is in Jesus? And does the influence of his Spirit attend your word, and make it the power of God unto salvation? Does he enable you to bring sinners from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God? Then go and learn what thou hast so often taught, "By grace are ye saved through faith:" "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saveth us." Learn to hang naked upon the cross of Christ, counting all thou hast done but dung and dross! Apply to him just in the spirit of the dying thief, of the harlot with her seven devils! else thou art still on the sand; and after saving others, thou wilt lose thy own soul.

5. Lord, increase my faith, if I now believe! else, give me faith, though but as a grain of mustard-seed! But "what doth it profit, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can" that "faith save him?" Oh, no! That faith which hath not works, which doth not produce both inward and outward holiness, which does not stamp the whole image of God on the heart, and purify us as he is pure; that faith which does not produce the whole of the religion described in the foregoing chapters, is not the faith of the gospel, not the Christian faith, not the faith which leads to glory. Oh, beware of this, above all other snares of the devil,—of resting on unholy, unsaving faith! If thou layest stress on this, thou art lost for ever: thou still buildest thy house upon the sand. When "the rain descends, and the floods come, it will surely fall, and great will be the fall of it."

6. Now, therefore, build thou upon a rock. By the grace of God, know thyself. Know and feel that thou wast shapen in wickedness, and in sin did thy mother conceive thee; and that thou thyself hast been heaping sin upon sin, ever since thou couldest discern good from evil. Own thyself guilty of eternal death; and renounce all hope of ever being able to save thyself. Be it all thy hope to be washed in his blood, and purified by his Spirit, "who himself bore" all "thy sins

in his own body upon the tree." And if thou knowest he hath taken away thy sins, so much the more abase thyself before him, in a continual sense of thy total dependence on him for every good thought, and word, and work, and of thy utter inability to all good unless he "water thee every moment."

7. Now weep for your sins, and mourn after God, till he turns your heaviness into joy. And even then weep with them that weep; and for them that weep not for themselves. Mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind; and see, but just before your eyes, the immense ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore, which has already swallowed up millions of millions of men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain! See here, the house of God eternal in the heavens! there, hell and destruction without a covering!—and thence learn the importance of every moment, which just appears and is gone for ever!

8. Now add to your seriousness, meekness of wisdom. Hold an even scale as to all your passions, but in particular, as to anger, sorrow, and fear. Calmly acquiesce in whatsoever is the will of God. Learn, in every state wherein you are, therewith to be content. Be mild to the good: be gentle toward all men; but especially toward the evil and the unthankful. Beware, not only of outward expressions of anger, such as calling thy brother, *Raca*, or *Thou fool;* but of every inward emotion contrary to love, though it go no farther than the heart. Be angry at sin, as an affront offered to the Majesty of heaven; but love the sinner still: like our Lord, who "looked round about upon the Pharisees with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." He was grieved at the sinners, angry at the sin. Thus be thou "angry, and sin not!"

9. Now do thou hunger and thirst, not for "the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life." Trample under foot the world, and the things of the world; all these riches, honours, pleasures. What is the world to thee? Let the dead

bury their dead; but follow thou after the image of God. And beware of quenching that blessed thirst, if it is already excited in thy soul, by what is vulgarly called religion; a poor, dull farce, a religion of form, of outside show, which leaves the heart still cleaving to the dust, as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the power of godliness, but a religion that is spirit and life; the dwelling in God, and God in thee; the being an inhabitant of eternity; the entering in by the blood of sprinkling "within the veil," and "sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus!"

10. Now, seeing thou canst do all things through Christ strengthening thee, be merciful as thy Father in heaven is merciful! Love thy neighbour as thyself! Love friends and enemies as thy own soul: and let thy love be longsuffering and patient towards all men. Let it be kind, soft, benign; inspiring thee with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection. Let it rejoice in the truth, wheresoever it is found; the truth that is after godliness. Enjoy whatsoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and goodwill among men. In love, cover all things,—of the dead and the absent speaking nothing but good; believe all things which may any way tend to clear your neighbour's character; hope all things in his favour; and endure all things, triumphing over all opposition: for true love never faileth, in time or in eternity.

11. Now be thou pure in heart; purified through faith from every unholy affection; "cleansing thyself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Being, through the power of his grace, purified from pride, by deep poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and mercifulness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, by hunger and thirst after righteousness; now love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength!

12. In a word: let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmost soul. Be thou

little, and base, and mean, and vile (beyond what words can express) in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the dust by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men, just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory or everlasting burnings! Let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering towards all men;—at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for God, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it! Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind! In this spirit do and suffer all things! Thus show thy faith by thy works; thus "do the will of thy Father which is in heaven!" And, as sure as thou now walkest with God on earth, thou shalt also reign with him in glory!

HYMN.

SAVIOUR, on me the want bestow,
Which all that feel shall surely know
Their sins on earth forgiven;
Give me to prove the kingdom mine,
And taste, in holiness divine,
The happiness of heaven.

Meeken my soul, thou heavenly Lamb,
That I in the new earth may claim
My hundred-fold reward;
My rich inheritance possess,
Co-heir with the great Prince of Peace,
Co-partner with my Lord.

Me with that restless thirst inspire,
That sacred, infinite desire;
And feast my hungry heart:
Less than thyself cannot suffice:
My soul for all thy fulness cries,
For all thou hast, and art.

Mercy who show shall mercy find;
Thy pitiful and tender mind
Be, Lord, on me bestow'd;
So shall I still the blessing gain,
And to eternal life retain
The mercy of my God.

Jesus, the crowning grace impart;
Bless me with purity of heart,
That, now beholding thee,
I soon may view thy open face,
On all thy glorious beauties gaze,
And God for ever see!

Not for my fault or folly's sake,
The name, or mode, or form, I take,—
But for true holiness,
Let me be wrong'd, reviled, abhorr'd;
And thee, my sanctifying Lord,
In life and death confess.

Call'd to sustain the hallow'd cross,
And suffer for thy righteous cause,
Pronounce me doubly blest:
And let thy glorious Spirit, Lord,
Assure me of my great reward,
In heaven's eternal feast.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXIII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) How does our Lord conclude his discourse?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Who are here addressed? Into what two classes are all hearers of the word divided?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is designed in the following discourse?

Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is first to be considered?

Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What does the saying imply, secondly?

Ques. 6. (I. 3.) What is implied thirdly?

Ques. 7. (I. 4.) What follows if any man marvels at this?

Ques. 8. (I. 5.) What did our Lord foresee as to their treatment of his saying?

Ques. 9. (I. 6.) Why does our Lord confirm it by an opposite comparison?

Ques. 10. (II. 1.) What is proposed secondly?

Ques. 11. (II. 2.) What is said of this man?

Ques. 12. (II. 3.) Why is he wise in God's account?

Ques. 13. (II. 4.) Will he therefore escape from war, from temptation?

Ques. 14. (III. 1.) Whom do these things concern?

Ques. 15. (III. 2.) Can any one dare to rest at this point? Is orthodoxy, or right thinking, a rock foundation?

Ques. 16. (III. 3.) What is said of building upon innocence?

Ques. 16. (III. 4.) Of being zealous of good works?

Ques. 18. (III. 5.) What is said of faith without works?

Ques. 19. (III. 6.) What ought we to do, therefore?

Ques. 20. (III. 7.) What further duty is enjoined?

Ques. 21. (III. 8.) What is here recommended?

Ques. 22. (III. 9.) What is said of hungering and thirsting?

Ques. 23. (III. 10.) What is said of being merciful? Of loving our neighbor?

Ques. 24. (III. 11.) What is said of purity of heart?

Ques. 25. (III. 12.) What is said of heart religion?

Ques. 26. (III. 12.) What assurance is given of the safety of those who follow these exhortations?

SERMON XXXIV.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

"If religion is the true relation of man to God, and morality the true relation of man to right," says Prof. Burwash, "then this discourse gives us the complete identification of religion and morality, as it makes God and right one. A simpler and better conception of the origin of the right than is here given cannot, we think, be found in any writer. It takes decidedly higher ground than his contemporary, Butler, who looks into the constitution of human nature for the proximate basis of obligation. Wesley agrees with Cudworth and Dr. Samuel Clarke in making the distinction between right and wrong an eternal distinction, and he is willing to allow their expression, 'the eternal fitness of things.' But his strong religious instincts can see no real eternal but God, and both things and their fitness are from God alone. This is the philosophy of the man with whom God is no intellectual abstraction, but the living God.

"We see also, in this discourse, how the absolute moral law enters into the Christian life, and becomes the Christian law of duty. In the view here presented Christian ethics do not imply any lowering of the absolute law to meet the necessities of human weakness It is God's perfect law in its immutable principles, which enters into our spiritual life and brings us to Christ. And the great principles of *Christian duty* which that perfect law evolves from our new Christian consciousness of filial relationship to God are as *perfect* as the absolute law from which they spring. The relation of these perfect principles to the imperfection of the

human instrument through which they work will be fully considered in connection with Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. It is only necessary here to note that neither the absolute moral law nor the law of Christian duty is lowered to meet the necessities of a doctrine of perfection."

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XXXIV.

The term law here signifies, not the Roman or the Mosaic, but the *moral law*, as appears from the particulars cited.

I. The original of this law; coeval with the creation of moral agents, and written in their inmost spirit by the finger of God.

II. The nature of this law. It is a transcript of the divine nature, and hence supreme, unchangeable reason; unalterable rectitude; the everlasting fitness of things.

III. The properties of this law.

1. Holy, as separate from all sin.

2. Just, rendering to all their dues; adapted to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and of every individual. But this nature of things depends on the will of God, which is ultimately God himself.

3. Good, full of benignity, and producing all blessedness in its results.

IV. The uses of this law.

1. To convince of sin. 2. To lead to Christ. 3. To prepare us for larger communications of the grace of God. Hence, though we have done with the law as a means of justification before God, yet the law is of unspeakable use and absolute necessity to us. The true liberty of God's people is not liberty from the *law*, but from *sin*.

SERMON XXXIV.

THE ORIGINAL, NATURE, PROPERTY, AND USE OF THE LAW.

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."—ROM. vii. 12.

1. PERHAPS there are few subjects within the whole compass of religion so little understood as this. The reader of this epistle is usually told, by "the law" St. Paul means the Jewish law; and so, apprehending himself to have no concern therewith, passes on without further thought about it. Indeed, some are not satisfied with this account; but observing the epistle is directed to the Romans, thence infer that the apostle in the beginning of this chapter alludes to the old Roman law. But as they have no more concern with this, than with the ceremonial law of Moses, so they spend not much thought on what they suppose is occasionally mentioned barely to illustrate another thing.

2. But a careful observer of the apostle's discourse will not be content with these light explications of it. And the more he weighs the words, the more convinced he will be, that St. Paul, by "the law" mentioned in this chapter, does not mean either the ancient law of Rome, or the ceremonial law of Moses. This will clearly appear to all who attentively consider the tenour of his discourse. He begins the chapter, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,)" to them who have been instructed therein from their youth, "that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" (What! the law of Rome only, or the ceremonial law? No, surely; but the moral law.) "For," to give a plain instance, "the woman which hath

a husband is bound by the" moral "law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man." From this particular instance the apostle proceeds to draw that general conclusion: "Wherefore, my brethren," by a plain parity of reason, "ye also are become dead to the law," the whole Mosaic institution, "by the body of Christ," offered for you, and bringing you under a new dispensation: "That ye should" without any blame "be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead;" and hath thereby given proof of his authority to make the change; "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." And this we can do now, whereas before we could not: "for when we were in the flesh," under the power of the flesh, that is, of corrupt nature, which was necessarily the case till we knew the power of Christ's resurrection, "the motions of sins, which were by the law," which were shown and inflamed by the Mosaic law, not conquered,—"did work in our members," broke out various ways,—"to bring forth fruit unto death." "But now we are delivered from the law;" from that whole moral as well as ceremonial economy; "that being dead whereby we were held;"—that entire institution being now as it were dead, and having no more authority over us than the husband, when dead, hath over his wife: "That we should serve him," who died for us and rose again, "in newness of spirit;"—in a new spiritual dispensation; "and not in the oldness of the letter;"—with a bare outward service, according to the letter of the Mosaic institution. (Verses 1–6.)

3. The apostle, having gone thus far in proving that the Christian had set aside the Jewish dispensation, and that the moral law itself, though it could never pass away, yet stood on a different foundation from what it did before,

—now stops to propose and answer an objection: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" So some might infer from a misapprehension of those words, "the motions of sins, which were by the law." "God forbid!" saith the apostle, that we should say so. Nay, the law is an irreconcilable enemy to sin; searching it out, wherever it is. "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust," evil desire, to be sin, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Verse 7.) After opening this further, in the four following verses, he subjoins this general conclusion, with regard more especially to the moral law, from which the preceding instance was taken: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

4. In order to explain and enforce these deep words, so little regarded, because so little understood, I shall endeavour to show, first, the original of this law; secondly, the nature thereof; thirdly, the properties, —that it is holy, and just, and good; and fourthly, the uses of it.

I. 1. I shall, first, endeavour to show the original of the moral law, often called "the law," by way of eminence. Now this is not, as some may have possibly imagined, of so late an institution as the time of Moses. Noah declared it to men long before that time, and Enoch before him. But we may trace its original higher still, even beyond the foundation of the world; to that period, unknown indeed to men, but doubtless enrolled in the annals of eternity, when "the morning stars" first "sang together," being newly called into existence. It pleased the great Creator to make these, his first-born sons, intelligent beings, that they might know Him that created them. For this end he endued them with understanding, to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil; and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty, a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were, likewise, enabled to offer him a free and willing service, a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master

2. To employ all the faculties which he had given them, particularly their understanding and liberty, he gave them a law, a complete model of all truth, so far as is intelligible to a finite being; and of all good, so far as angelic minds were capable of embracing it. It was also the design of their beneficent Governor herein to make way for a continual increase of their happiness; seeing every instance of obedience to that law would both add to the perfection of their nature, and entitle them to a higher reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its season.

3. In like manner, when God, in his appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when he had raised man from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and caused him to become a living soul, endued with power to choose good or evil; he gave to this free, intelligent creature the same law as to his first-born children;—not wrote, indeed, upon tables of stone, or any corruptible substance, but engraven on his heart by the finger of God; wrote in the inmost spirit both of men and of angels; to the intent it might never be far off, never hard to be understood, but always at hand, and always shining with clear light, even as the sun in the midst of heaven.

4. Such was the original of the law of God. With regard to man, it was coeval with his nature; but with regard to the elder sons of God, it shone in its full splendour "or ever the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round world were made." But it was not long before man rebelled against God, and, by breaking this glorious law, wellnigh effaced it out of his heart; the eyes of his understanding being darkened in the same measure as his soul was "alienated from the life of God." And yet God did not despise the work of his own hands; but, being reconciled to man through the Son of his love, he, in some measure, reinscribed the law on the heart of his dark, sinful creature "He" again "showed thee, O man, what is good," although not as in the beginning, "even to do justly,

and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

5. And this he showed, not only to our first parents, but likewise to all their posterity, by "that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world." But, notwithstanding this light, all flesh had, in process of time, "corrupted their way before him;" till he chose out of mankind a peculiar people, to whom he gave a more perfect knowledge of his law: and the heads of this, because they were slow of understanding, he wrote on two tables of stone; which he commanded the fathers to teach their children, through all succeeding generations.

6. And thus it is, that the law of God is now made known to them that know not God. They hear, with the hearing of the ear, the things that were written aforetime for our instruction. But this does not suffice: they cannot, by this means, comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. God alone can reveal this by his Spirit. And so he does to all that truly believe, in consequence of that gracious promise made to all the Israel of God: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. And this shall be the covenant that I will make; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.)

II. 1. The nature of that law which was originally given to angels in heaven and man in paradise, and which God has so mercifully promised to write afresh in the hearts of all true believers, was the second thing I proposed to show. In order to which, I would first observe, that although the "law" and the "commandment" are sometimes differently taken, (the commandment meaning but a part of the law,) yet in the text they are used as equivalent terms, implying one and the same thing. But we cannot understand here, either by one or the other, the ceremonial law. It is not the ceremonial law, whereof the apostle says, in the words

above recited, "I had not known sin but by the law:" this is too plain to need a proof. Neither is it the ceremonial law which saith, in the words immediately subjoined, "Thou shalt not covet." Therefore the ceremonial law has no place in the present question.

2. Neither can we understand by "the law" mentioned in the text the Mosaic dispensation. It is true, the word is sometimes so understood; as when the apostle says, speaking to the Galatians, (iii. 17,) "The covenant that was confirmed before," namely, with Abraham, the father of the faithful, "the law," that is, the Mosaic dispensation, "which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." But it cannot be understood so in the text; for the apostle never bestows so high commendations as these upon that imperfect and shadowy dispensation. He nowhere affirms the Mosaic to be a spiritual law; or that it is holy, and just, and good. Neither is it true, that God will write that law in the hearts of those whose iniquities he remembers no more. It remains, that "the law," eminently so termed, is no other than the moral law.

3. Now, this law is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity. It is He whom, in his essence, no man hath seen or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to his creatures as they are able to bear it; manifested to give, and not to destroy, life,—that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the apostle says of his Son: it is απαυγασμα της δοξης, και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου, —*the streaming forth* or *out-beaming of his glory, the express image of his person.*

4. "If virtue," said the ancient heathen, "could assume such a shape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what wonderful love would she excite in us!" If virtue could do this! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in such a shape as to be beheld

with open face by all those whose eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law, but divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form? What is it but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with such a vehicle as to appear even to human understanding?

5. If we survey the law of God in another point of view, it is supreme, unchangeable reason; it is unalterable rectitude; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created. I am sensible, what a shortness, and even impropriety, there is, in these and all other human expressions, when we endeavour by these faint pictures to shadow out the deep things of God. Nevertheless, we have no better, indeed no other way, during this our infant state of existence. As we now "know" but "in part," so we are constrained to "prophesy," that is, speak of the things of God, "in part" also. "We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness," while we are in this house of clay. While I am "a child," I must "speak as a child:" but I shall soon "put away childish things;" for "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

6. But to return. The law of God (speaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the Divine nature; yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of his essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High. It is the delight and wonder of cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wise believer, every well-instructed child of God upon earth.

III. 1. Such is the nature of the ever-blessed law of God. I am, in the third place, to show the properties of it:—not all; for that would exceed the wisdom of an angel; but those only which are mentioned in the text. These are three: it is "holy, just, and good" And, first, the law is holy.

2. In this expression the apostle does not appear to speak of its effects, but rather of its nature: as St. James, speaking of the same thing under another name, says, "The wisdom from above" (which is no other than this law, written in our heart) "is first pure;" (iii. 17;) αγνη,—*chaste, spotless;* eternally and essentially holy. And, consequently, when it is transcribed into the life, as well as the soul, it is (as the same apostle terms it, i. 27) θρησκεια καθαρα και αμιαντος,—*pure religion and undefiled;* or, the pure, clean, unpolluted worship of God.

3. It is, indeed, in the highest degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy. Otherwise it could not be the immediate offspring, and much less the express resemblance, of God, who is essential holiness. It is pure from all sin, clean and unspotted from any touch of evil. It is a chaste virgin, incapable of any defilement, of any mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no fellowship with sin of any kind: for "what communion hath light with darkness?" As sin is, in its very nature, enmity to God, so his law is enmity to sin.

4. Therefore it is that the apostle rejects with such abhorrence that blasphemous supposition, that the law of God is either sin itself, or the cause of sin. God forbid that we should suppose it is the cause of sin, because it is the discoverer of it; because it detects the hidden things of darkness, and drags them out into open day. It is true, by this means, (as the apostle observes, Romans vii. 13,) "sin appears to be sin." All its disguises are torn away, and it appears in its native deformity. It is true likewise, that "sin, by the commandment, becomes exceeding sinful:" being now committed against light and knowledge, being stripped even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loses its excuse, as well as disguise, and becomes far more odious both to God and man. Yea, and it is true, that "sin worketh death by that which is good;" which in itself is pure and holy. When it is dragged out to light, it rages the more: when it is restrained, it bursts out with great

violence. Thus the apostle, (speaking in the person of one who was convinced of sin, but not yet delivered from it,) "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment" detecting and endeavouring to restrain it, disdained the restraint, and so much the more "wrought in me all manner of concupiscence;" (verse 8;) all manner of foolish and hurtful desire, which that commandment sought to restrain. Thus, "when the commandment came, sin revived:" (verse 9:) it fretted and raged the more. But this is no stain on the commandment. Though it is abused, it cannot be defiled. This only proves that "the heart of man is desperately wicked." But "the law" of God "is holy" still.

5. And it is, secondly, just. It renders to all their due. It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said, or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which he has made. It is adapted, in all respects, to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and every individual. It is suited to all the circumstances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether such as have existed from the beginning, or such as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitness of things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing arbitrary in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof is totally dependent upon his will; so that, "Thy will be done," is the supreme, universal law, both in earth and heaven.

6. "But is the will of God the cause of his law? Is his will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing *therefore* right, because God wills it? or does he will it because it is right?"

I fear this celebrated question is more curious than useful. And perhaps in the manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the regard that is due from a creature to the Creator and Governor of all

things. It is hardly decent for man to call the supreme God to give an account to him. Nevertheless, with awe and reverence, we may speak a little. The Lord pardon us if we speak amiss!

7 It seems then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God. Otherwise it vanishes away. For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say that the will of God, or that God himself, is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing.

8. Again: if the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends upon the nature and fitness of things, and on their essential relations to each other; (I do not say, their eternal relations; because the eternal relation of things existing in time, is little less than a contradiction;) if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God; because those things themselves, with all their relations, are the works of his hands. By his will, "for his pleasure" alone, they all "are and were created."

9. And yet it may be granted, (which is probably all that a considerate person would contend for,) that in every particular case, God wills this or this, (suppose, that men should honour their parents,) because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation wherein they stand.

10. The law then is right and just concerning all things. And it is good as well as just. This we may easily infer from the fountain whence it flowed. For what was this but the goodness of God? What but goodness alone inclined him to impart that divine copy of himself to the holy angels? To what else can we impute his bestowing upon man the same transcript of his own nature? And what but tender love constrained him afresh to manifest his will to fallen man,—either to Adam, or any of his seed, who, like him, were "come

short of the glory of God?" Was it not mere love that moved him to publish his law after the understandings of men were darkened? and to send his prophets to declare that law to the blind, thoughtless children of men? Doubtless, his goodness it was which raised up Enoch and Noah to be preachers of righteousness; which caused Abraham, his friend, and Isaac, and Jacob, to bear witness to his truth. It was his goodness alone, which, when "darkness had covered the earth, and thick darkness the people," gave a written law to Moses, and through him to the nation whom He had chosen. It was love which explained these living oracles by David and all the prophets that followed; until, when the fulness of time was come, he sent his only-begotten Son, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil," confirm every jot and tittle thereof; till, having wrote it in the hearts of all his children, and put all his enemies under his feet, "he shall deliver up" his mediatorial "kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all."

11. And this law, which the goodness of God gave at first, and has preserved through all ages, is, like the fountain from whence it springs, full of goodness and benignity: it is mild and kind; it is, as the Psalmist expresses it, "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." It is winning and amiable. It includes "whatsoever things are lovely or of good report. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise" before God and his holy angels, they are all comprised in this; wherein are hid all the treasures of the divine wisdom, and knowledge, and love.

12. And it is good in its effects, as well as in its nature. As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God written in the heart are "righteousness, and peace, and assurance for ever." Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace which passeth all understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the testimony of a good conscience toward God. It is not so properly a pledge, as "an

earnest, of our inheritance," being a part of the purchased possession. It is God made manifest in our flesh, and bringing with him eternal life; assuring us by that pure and perfect love, that we are "sealed unto the day of redemption;" that he will "spare us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him," "in the day when he maketh up his jewels;" and that there remaineth for us "a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

IV. 1. It remains only to show, in the fourth and last place, the uses of the law. And the first use of it, without question, is, to convince the world of sin. This is, indeed, the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost; who can work it without any means at all, or by whatever means it pleaseth him, however insufficient in themselves, or even improper to produce such an effect. And, accordingly, some there are whose hearts have been broken in pieces, in a moment, either in sickness or in health, without any visible cause, or any outward means whatever; and others (one in an age) have been awakened to a sense of the "wrath of God abiding on them," by hearing that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law. It is this which, being set home on the conscience, generally breaketh the rocks in pieces. It is more especially this part of the word of God which is ζων και ενεργης,—*quick and powerful*, full of life and energy, "and sharper than any two-edged sword." This, in the hand of God and of those whom he hath sent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and "divides asunder even the soul and the spirit;" yea, as it were, the very "joints and marrow." By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig-leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His "mouth is stopped," and he stands "guilty before God."

2. To slay the sinner is, then, the first use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth; not only under the sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, "dead in trespasses and sins." The second use of it is, to bring him unto life, unto Christ, that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the part of a severe schoolmaster. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the Spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stripped of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart,

> "I give up every plea beside,—
> Lord, I am damn'd; but thou hast died."

3. The third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the law, and that, in this sense, "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth." "The end of the law:"—so he is, "for righteousness," for justification, "to every one that believeth." Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ; who is also, in another respect, the end or scope of the law,—the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to him, it has yet a further office; namely, to keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more,—

"Closer and closer let us cleave
To his beloved embrace;
Expect his fulness to receive,
And grace to answer grace."

4. Allowing, then, that every believer has done with the law, as it means the Jewish ceremonial law, or the entire Mosaic dispensation; (for these Christ hath taken out of the way;) yea, allowing we have done with the moral law, as a means of procuring our justification; for we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus;" yet, in another sense, we have not done with this law: for it is still of unspeakable use, first, in convincing us of the sin that yet remains both in our hearts and lives, and thereby keeping us close to Christ, that his blood may cleanse us every moment; secondly, in deriving strength from our Head into his living members, whereby he empowers them to do what his law commands; and thirdly, in confirming our hope of whatsoever it commands and we have not yet attained,—of receiving grace upon grace, till we are in actual possession of the fulness of his promises.

5. How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer! While he cries out, "Oh, what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study in it;" he sees daily, in that divine mirror, more and more of his own sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a sinner in all things,—that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God; and that every moment sends him to Christ. This shows him the meaning of what is written, "Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, Holiness to the Lord. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead," (the type of our great High Priest,) "that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts;" (so far are our prayers or holy things from atoning for the rest of our sin;) "and it shall be always upon his forehead, that

they may be accepted before the Lord." (Exodus xxviii. 36, 38.)

6. To explain this by a single instance: The law says, 'Thou shalt not kill;" and hereby (as our Lord teaches) forbids not only outward acts, but every unkind word or thought. Now, the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come short of it; and the more I feel this, the more I feel my need of his blood to atone for all my sin, and of his Spirit to purify my heart, and make me "perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

7. Therefore I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ; seeing I now want it as much to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise, this "evil heart of unbelief" would immediately "depart from the living God." Indeed each is continually sending me to the other,—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me "above gold or precious stones;" seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfil in its season.

8. Who art thou then, O man, that "judgest the law, and speakest evil of the law?"—that rankest it with sin, Satan, and death, and sendest them all to hell together? The apostle James esteemed judging or "speaking evil of the law" so enormous a piece of wickedness, that he knew not how to aggravate the guilt of judging our brethren more, than by showing it included this. "So now," says he, "thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge!" A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee! So thou hast set up thyself in the judgment-seat of Christ, and cast down the rule whereby he will judge the world! Oh, take knowledge what advantage Satan hath gained over thee; and, for the time to come, never think or speak lightly of, much less dress up as a scarecrow, this blessed in

strument of the grace of God. Yea, love and value it for the sake of Him from whom it came, and of Him to whom it leads. Let it be thy glory and joy, next to the cross of Christ. Declare its praise, and make it honourable before all men.

9. And if thou art thoroughly convinced that it is the offspring of God, that it is the copy of all his inimitable perfections, and that it is "holy, and just, and good," but especially to them that believe; then, instead of casting it away as a polluted thing, see that thou cleave to it more and more. Never let the law of mercy and truth, of love to God and man, of lowliness, meekness, and purity, forsake thee. "Bind it about thy neck; write it on the table of thy heart." Keep close to the law, if thou wilt keep close to Christ; hold it fast; let it not go. Let this continually lead thee to the atoning blood, continually confirm thy hope, till all the "righteousness of the law is fulfilled in thee," and thou art "filled with all the fulness of God."

10. And if thy Lord hath already fulfilled his word, if he hath already "written his law in thy heart," then "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free." Thou art not only made free from Jewish ceremonies, from the guilt of sin, and the fear of hell; (these are so far from being the whole, that they are the least and lowest part of Christian liberty;) but, what is infinitely more, from the power of sin, from serving the devil, from offending God. Oh, stand fast in this liberty; in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named! Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving him with all thy strength! This is perfect freedom; thus to keep his law, and to walk in all his commandments, blameless. "Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." I do not mean of Jewish bondage; nor yet of bondage to the fear of hell: these, I trust, are far from thee. But beware of being entangled again with the yoke of sin, of any inward or outward transgression of the law. Abhor sin far more than death or hell: abhor sin itself,

far more than the punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger; of every evil temper, or word, or work. "Look unto Jesus;" and in order thereto, look more and more into the perfect law, "the law of liberty;" and "continue therein:" so shalt thou daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXIV.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of the subject of this discourse. What is the reader usually told?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Is this a satisfactory explication of the text?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What objection is proposed and answered by the apostle?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What is proposed in this sermon?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is first proposed under this head?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What is here said of the purpose of the law?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) Was this law given to man at the creation?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) Does the same law apply to men and angels? Was it in existence before the creation of man?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) How was this shown to our first parents?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) What is said of those who know not God?

Ques. 11. (II. 1.) What is proposed in the second division of the sermon?

Ques. 12. (II. 2.) Is the Mosaic dispensation the law here meant?

Ques. 13. (II. 3.) Of whom is this law an incorruptible picture?

Ques. 14. (II. 4.) What quotation is given from an ancient heathen?

Ques. 15. (II. 5.) What is this law in another point of view?

Ques. 16. (II. 6.) Of what is the law a copy?

Ques. 17. (III. 1.) What remains to be shown in the third place?

Ques. 18. (III. 2.) Does the apostle speak of its effects or of its nature?

Ques. 19. (III. 3.) What is it in the highest degree?

Ques. 20. (III. 4.) What does the apostle reject with abhorrence?

Ques. 21. (III. 5.) What is it secondly?

Ques. 22. (III. 6.) What question is here propounded? What s said of this celebrated question?

Ques. 23. (III. 7.) Where does the whole difficulty arise?

Ques. 24. (III. 8.) On what does this law depend? What is said of the phrase "eternal relations?"

Ques. 25. (III. 9.) Does God will a thing because it is right?

Ques. 26. (III. 10.) Is the law just and right concerning all things?

Ques. 27. (III. 11.) What is further said of the law?

Ques. 28. (III. 12.) Is it good in its effects as well as in its nature?

Ques. 29. (IV. 1.) What remains to be shown in the fourth place?

Ques. 30. (IV. 2.) What is the first use of the law? The second use?

Ques. 31. (IV. 3.) What is the third use of the law?

Ques 32. (IV. 4.) What is said further concerning it?

Ques. 33. (IV. 5.) With what does this view agree?

Ques. 34. (IV. 6.) What explanation is here given?

Ques. 35. (IV. 7.) What is said of sparing the law?

Ques. 36. (IV. 8.) What is here said of judging the law?

Ques. 37. (IV. 9–10.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMONS XXXV.-XXXVI.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In these two sermons we have brought into the most distinct prominence the opposition of the true evangelical doctrine to all Antinomianism. As early as 1740 Mr. Wesley found it necessary to contend against the Antinomianism of the Moravians, which he describes as follows (see Journals, Sept., 1741): "You undervalue good works (especially works of outward mercy), never publicly insisting on the necessity of them, nor declaring their weight and excellency. Hence, when some of your brethren have spoken of them, they put them on a wrong foot, viz.: 'If you find yourself moved, if your heart is free to it, then reprove, exhort, relieve.' By this means you wholly avoid the taking up your cross, in order to do good; and also substitute an uncertain, precarious *inward motion* in the place of *the plain written word*. Nay, one of your members has said of good works in general (whether works of piety or charity), 'A believer is no more obliged to do these works of the law than a subject of the King of England is obliged to obey the laws of the King of France.'" The reader is familiar with the plain reference to this form of Antinomianism in the rules of society, dated 1743. In the Doctrinal Minutes of the first Conference, 1744, we find the following reference to this, as well as the Calvinistic form of Antinomianism:

"Q. What is Antinomianism?

"A. The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

"Q. What are the main pillars hereof?

"A. 1. That Christ abolished the moral law.

"2. That, therefore, Christians are not obliged to observe It.

"3. That one branch of Christian liberty is liberty from obeying the commandments of God.

"4. That it is bondage to do a thing because it is commanded, or forbear it because it is forbidden.

"5. That a believer is not obliged to use the ordinances of God, or to do good works.

"6. That a preacher ought not to exhort to good works; not unbelievers, because it is hurtful; not believers, because it is needless."

About the date of these Minutes some of Whitefield's followers had become avowed Antinomians. The utterly licentious tendency of their teachings will scarcely bear repetition, but it stirred Mr. Wesley to strenuous efforts to counteract the poison, and about the years 1744 and 1745 he published the tracts entitled "Dialogues between an Antinomian and His Friend." These tracts are almost as valuable in view of the errors of our own time as they were a hundred years ago.

At first the great majority of the Calvinistic Methodists were free from direct Antinomian teaching; but the leaven seems to have spread until, in the year 1770, Mr. Wesley found it necessary to make a vigorous protest in Conference against the growing evil, which he did in the following extract from the Minutes:

"We said, in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?

"1. With regard to *man's faithfulness.* Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not 'give him the true riches.'

"2. With regard to *working for life.* This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. Labor, Εργαζεσθε—literally *work*—for the meat that 'endureth to everlasting life.' And,

in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should 'cease from evil,' and 'learn to do well.' Whoever repents should do 'works meet for repentance.' And if this is not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?

"Review the whole affair.

"1. Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

"2. But who among those who never heard of Christ? He that feareth God and worketh righteousness according to the light that he has.

"3. Is this the same with 'he that is sincere?' Nearly, if not quite.

"4. Is not this salvation by works? Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

"5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid *about words*.

"6. As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works—yea, because of our works. How does this differ from '*secundum merita operum?*' 'As our works deserve?' Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

"7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from a matter of fact. God does, in fact, justify those who by their own confession 'neither feared God nor wrought righteousness.' Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did 'fear God and work righteousness?' His own saying so is not proof; for we know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

"8. Does not talking of a justified or sanctified state tend to mislead men, almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every

hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing God, according to our works, according to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behavior."

These propositions seem to lie on the very verge of legality. Their interpretation must be guarded by the *fundamental principles of evangelical religion already laid down;* and thus guarded, they defend and enforce the great fact that under the gospel the Christian is in a state of *genuine probation;* and that the immutable claims of God's law are neither minimized nor evaded by the gospel. For the exposition and defense of the Minutes, the student must refer to the great work of the Rev. John Fletcher, M.A.

One of the latest authoritative documents prepared by Mr. Wesley's hand bears upon this subject. In preparing the Articles of Religion for the Methodist Episcopal Church he omitted from the Thirty-nine Articles Article XIII., "Of Good Works before Justification." This Article was evidently intended to meet the Tridentine doctrine of merit of congruity in works of penitence as a condition of justification. The omission is of especial interest in view of the use he has made of this same Article in Sermon V.—*Burwash.*

In its grosser form the struggle between the Romanist and the Antinomian has not occupied a prominent place in the controversial theology of the present age. There are very few who advocate, in distinct terms, the objectionable tenets of the party called by John Fletcher "the Solifidians." But it is proper to observe that a subtle and dangerous form of Antinomianism is always active, and its influence is perhaps as destructive as the avowed tenets of the Moravian opponents of Mr. Wesley. We allude to the teaching which incorporates the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints with a truly evangelical conception of conversion. A sinner repents, believes, and is, we believe, regenerated by the Spirit of God. At once he is declared to be "saved." In a certain sense this is true, but the Antinomian goes farther, and tells him, "You are as certain of getting to heaven as if you were already there." This dangerous doctrine,

"Once in grace always in grace," has lost none of its popularity with a large section of the Christian Church. It is Antinomianism, pure and simple, and we cannot be too vigilant in detecting and, as far as in us lies, in exposing and refuting a doctrinal error that is so potent for evil.

ANALYSIS OF SERMONS XXXV.–XXXVI.

The gospel presents the only way of salvation; and stands opposed to a legal justification, but not, as some suppose, to the law itself. The law is so closely connected with the gospel that to destroy one is to destroy both. We must, therefore, carefully guard against making void the law through faith.

I. Consider the most usual methods of making void the law through faith.

By never preaching the law. The gospel cannot answer the ends proposed in preaching the law. There is neither command nor precedent in Scripture for offering Christ to the unawakened sinner. The example of Paul is illustrative. Preaching the merits of Christ may give the most comfort, but will prove a real blessing only to those who are prepared for it.

II. By teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness; that holiness is less necessary now than before Christ came; or that a less degree of it is necessary; or that it is less necessary to believers than to others. It is true that we are not under the covenant of works; and that we are justified by faith without deeds of the law as a *previous condition;* but not without deeds of the law as an immediate fruit, without which faith is nothing worth.

III. In fact; living as if faith excused us from holiness. The Christian is not under the law, ceremonial or Mosaic; nor under the moral law *as the condition of acceptance;* nor under its sentence of wrath. But he is under the gracious principle of love, which should be as sensitive to all sin as the principle of fear.

Recapitulation.

IV. Methods of establishing the law.

1. By preaching it, in its whole extent, as Christ did in its full literal sense and in its spiritual meaning.

2. By so preaching faith as to produce holiness. Faith is not an end itself, but a *process* to love. Love is from eternity and to eternity. Faith is designed to re-establish the law of love.

3. By establishing it in our hearts and lives. *This can only be done by faith.* Walking by faith, we go swiftly on in the way of holiness, especially when our faith is the full confidence of love. Love fulfills not only the negative but also the positive law; not only in outward act, but also in inward spirit. In the light of faith the conscience becomes more than ever tender to fly from sin.

SERMON XXXV.

THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH

DISCOURSE I.

"*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*"—Rom. iii. 31.

St. Paul, having in the beginning of this Epistle laid down his general proposition, namely, that "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;"—the powerful means whereby God makes every believer a partaker of present and eternal salvation;—goes on to show that there is no other way under heaven whereby men can be saved. He speaks particularly of salvation from the guilt of sin, which he commonly terms justification. And that all men stood in need of this, that none could plead their own innocence, he proves at large by various arguments, addressed to the Jews as well as the heathens. Hence he infers, (in the 19th verse of this chapter,) "that every mouth," whether of Jew or heathen, must be "stopped" from excusing or justifying himself, "and all the world become guilty before God." "Therefore," saith he, by his own obedience, "by the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight," "But now the righteousness of God, without the law,"—without our previous obedience thereto,—"is manifested;" even "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all that believe." "For there is no difference,"—as to their need of justification, or the manner wherein they attain it;—"for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;"—the

glorious image of God wherein they were created: and all (who attain) "are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus;"—that, without any impeachment to his justice, he might show him mercy for the sake of that propitiation. "Therefore we conclude," (which was the grand position he had undertaken to establish,) "that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law." (Verses 20–28.)

2. It was easy to foresee an objection which might be made, and which has in fact been made in all ages; namely, that to say we are justified without the works of the law, is to abolish the law. The apostle, without entering into a formal dispute, simply denies the charge. "Do we then," says he, "make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

3. The strange imagination of some, that St. Paul, when he says, "A man is justified without the works of the law," means only the ceremonial law, is abundantly confuted by these very words. For did St. Paul establish the ceremonial law? It is evident he did not. He did make void that law through faith, and openly avowed his doing so. It was the moral law only, of which he might truly say, We do not make void, but establish this through faith.

4. But all men are not herein of his mind. Many there are who will not agree to this. Many in all ages of the church, even among those who bore the name of Christians, have contended, that "the faith once delivered to the saints" was designed to make void the whole law. They would no more spare the moral than the ceremonial law, but were for "hewing," as it were, both "in pieces before the Lord;" vehemently maintaining, "If you establish any law, Christ shall profit you nothing; Christ is become of no effect to you; ye are fallen from grace."

5. But is the zeal of these men according to know-

ledge? Have they observed the connection between the law and faith? and that, considering the close connection between them, to destroy one is indeed to destroy both?—that, to abolish the moral law, is, in truth, to abolish faith and the law together? as leaving no proper means, either of bringing us to faith, or of stirring up that gift of God in our soul.

6. It therefore behoves all who desire either to come to Christ, or to walk in him whom they have received, to take heed how they "make void the law through faith:" to secure us effectually against which, let us inquire, first, Which are the most usual ways of making "void the law through faith?" And, secondly, how we may follow the apostle, and by faith "establish the law."

I. 1. Let us, first, inquire, Which are the most usual ways of making void the law through faith? Now the way for a preacher to make it all void at a stroke, is, not to preach it at all. This is just the same thing as to blot it out of the oracles of God. More especially, when it is done with design; when it is made a rule, not to preach the law; and the very phrase, "a preacher of the law," is used as a term of reproach, as though it meant little less than an enemy of the gospel.

2. All this proceeds from the deepest ignorance of the nature, properties, and use of the law; and proves, that those who act thus, either know not Christ,—are utter strangers to living faith,—or, at least, that they are but babes in Christ, and, as such, "unskilled in the word of righteousness."

3. Their grand plea is this: That preaching the gospel, that is, according to their judgment, the speaking of nothing but the sufferings and merits of Christ, answers all the ends of the law. But this we utterly deny. It does not answer the very first end of the law, namely, the convincing men of sin; the awakening those who are still asleep on the brink of hell. There may have been here and there an exempt case. One in a thousand may have been awakened by the gospel; but

this is no general rule; the ordinary method of God is, to convict sinners by the law, and that only. The gospel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which our Lord himself used, for this end. We have no authority in Scripture for applying it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. Nor have we any more ground to expect this, from the nature of the thing. "They that be whole," as our Lord himself observes, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." It is absurd, therefore, to offer a physician to them that are whole, or that at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them that they are sick; otherwise they will not thank you for your labour. It is equally absurd to offer Christ to them whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. It is, in the proper sense, "casting pearls before swine." Doubtless "they will trample them under foot;" and it is no more than you have reason to expect, if they also "turn again and rend you."

4. "But although there is no command in Scripture to offer Christ to the careless sinner, yet are there not scriptural precedents for it?" I think not: I know not any. I believe you cannot produce one, either from the four Evangelists, or the Acts of the Apostles. Neither can you prove this to have been the practice of any of the apostles, from any passage in all their writings.

5. "Nay, does not the apostle Paul say, in his former Epistle to the Corinthians, 'We preach Christ crucified?' (i. 23;) and in his latter, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord?'" (iv. 5.)

We consent to rest the cause on this issue; to tread in his steps, to follow his example. Only preach you just as Paul preached, and the dispute is at an end.

For although we are certain he preached Christ in as perfect a manner as the very chief of the apostles, yet who preached the law more than St. Paul? Therefore he did not think the gospel answered the same end.

6. The very first sermon of St. Paul's which is recorded, concludes in these words: "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts xiii. 39, &c.) Now it is manifest all this is preaching the law, in the sense wherein you understand the term; even although great part of, if not all, his hearers, were either Jews or religious proselytes, (verse 43,) and, therefore, probably many of them, in some degree at least, convinced of sin already. He first reminds them, that they could not be justified by the law of Moses, but only by faith in Christ; and then severely threatens them with the judgments of God,—which is, in the strongest sense, preaching the law.

7. In his next discourse, that to the heathens at Lystra, (xiv. 15, &c.,) we do not find so much as the name of Christ: the whole purport of it is, that they should "turn from those vain idols unto the living God." Now confess the truth. Do not you think, if you had been there, you could have preached much better than he? I should not wonder if you thought too that his *preaching so ill* occasioned his being *so ill treated;* and that his being *stoned* was a just judgment upon him for not *preaching Christ!*

8 To the jailer indeed, when "he sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he immediately said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" (Acts xvi. 29, &c.;) and in the case of one so deeply convinced of sin, who would not have said the same? But to the men of Athens you find him speaking in a quite different manner; reproving their superstition, ignorance, and idolatry; and strongly moving them to repent, from the consideration of a future judgment, and of the resur-

rection from the dead. (xvii. 24–31.) Likewise when Felix sent for Paul, on purpose that he might "hear him concerning the faith in Christ;" instead of preaching Christ in *your* sense, (which would probably have caused the governor either to mock, or to contradict and blaspheme,) "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," till Felix (hardened as he was) "trembled." (xxiv. 24, 25.) Go thou, and tread in his steps. Preach Christ to the careless sinner, by reasoning "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come!"

9. If you say, "But he preached Christ in a different manner in his Epistles:" I answer, (1.) He did not there preach at all; not in that sense wherein we speak: for preaching, in our present question, means speaking before a congregation. But waving this, I answer, (2.) His Epistles are directed, not to unbelievers, such as those we are now speaking of, but "to the saints of God," in Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and other places. Now, unquestionably, he would speak more of Christ to these, than to those who were without God in the world. And yet, (3.) Every one of these is full of the law, even the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians; in both of which he does what you term "preaching the law," and that to believers, as well as unbelievers.

10. From hence it is plain, you know not what it is to preach Christ, in the sense of the apostle. For doubtless St. Paul judged himself to be preaching Christ both to Felix, and at Antioch, Lystra, and Athens: from whose example every thinking man must infer, that not only the declaring the love of Christ to sinners, but also the declaring that he will come from heaven in flaming fire, is in the apostle's sense preaching Christ; yea, in the full scriptural meaning of the word. To preach Christ, is to preach what he hath revealed, either in the Old or New Testament; so that you are then as really preaching Christ, when you are saying, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people

that forget God," as when you are saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

11. Consider this well; that to preach Christ, is to preach all things that Christ hath spoken; all his promises; all his threatenings and commands; all that is written in his book; and then you will know how to preach Christ without making void the law

12. "But does not the greatest blessing attend those discourses wherein we peculiarly preach the merits and sufferings of Christ?"

Probably, when we preach to a congregation of mourners, or of believers, these will be attended with the greatest blessing; because such discourses are peculiarly suited to their state. At least, these will usually convey the most comfort. But this is not always the greatest blessing. I may sometimes receive a far greater by a discourse that cuts me to the heart, and humbles me to the dust. Neither should I receive that comfort, if I were to preach or to hear no discourses but on the sufferings of Christ. These, by constant repetition, would lose their force, and grow more and more flat and dead, till at length they would become a dull round of words, without any spirit, or life, or virtue. So that thus to preach Christ must, in process of time, make void the gospel, as well as the law.

II. 1. A second way of making void the law through faith is, the teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness. This divides itself into a thousand smaller paths, and many there are that walk therein. Indeed, there are few that wholly escape it; few who are convinced, we are saved by faith, but are sooner or later, more or less, drawn aside into this by-way.

2. All those are drawn into this by-way, who, if it be not their settled judgment that faith in Christ entirely sets aside the necessity of keeping his law; yet suppose, either, (1.) That holiness is less necessary now than it

was before Christ came; or, (2.) That a less degree of it is necessary; or, (3.) That it is less necessary to believers than to others. Yea, and so are all those who, although their judgment be right in the general, yet think they may take more liberty in particular cases than they could have done before they believed. Indeed, the using the term *liberty*, in such a manner, for liberty from obedience or holiness, shows at once that their judgment is perverted, and that they are guilty of what they imagined to be far from them; namely, of making void the law through faith, by supposing faith to supersede holiness.

3. The first plea of those who teach this expressly is, that we are now under the covenant of grace, not works; and therefore we are no longer under the necessity of performing the works of the law.

And who ever was under the covenant of works? None but Adam before the fall. He was fully and properly under that covenant, which required perfect, universal obedience, as the one condition of acceptance; and left no place for pardon, upon the very least transgression. But no man else was ever under this, neither Jew nor Gentile; neither before Christ nor since. All his sons were and are under the covenant of grace The manner of their acceptance is this: the free grace of God, through the merits of Christ, give. pardon to them that believe; that believe with such a faith as, working by love, produces all obedience and holiness.

4. The case is not, therefore, as you suppose, that men were *once* more obliged to obey God, or to work the works of his law, than they are *now*. This is a supposition you cannot make good. But we should have been obliged, if we had been under the covenant of works, to have done those works antecedent to our acceptance. Whereas now all good works, though as necessary as ever, are not antecedent to our acceptance, but consequent upon it. Therefore the nature of the covenant of grace gives you no ground, no encouragement at all, to

set aside any instance or degree of obedience; any part or measure of holiness.

5. "But are we not justified by faith, without the works of the law?" Undoubtedly we are; without the works either of the ceremonial or the moral law. And would to God all men were convinced of this! It would prevent innumerable evils; Antinomianism in particular: for, generally speaking, they are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians. Running into an extreme so palpably contrary to Scripture, they occasion others to run into the opposite one. These, seeking to be justified by works, affright those from allowing any place for them.

6. But the truth lies between both. We are, doubtless, justified by faith. This is the corner-stone of the whole Christian building. We are justified without the works of the law, as any previous condition of justification; but they are an immediate fruit of that faith whereby we are justified. So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth; we are yet in our sins. Therefore, that we are justified by faith, even by faith without works, is no ground for making void the law through faith; or for imagining that faith is a dispensation from any kind or degree of holiness.

7. "Nay, but does not St. Paul expressly say, 'Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness?' And does it not follow from hence, that faith is to a believer in the room, in the place, of righteousness? But if faith is in the room of righteousness or holiness, what need is there of this too?"

This, it must be acknowledged, comes home to the point, and is, indeed, the main pillar of Antinomianism. And yet it needs not a long or laboured answer. We allow, (1.) That God justifies the ungodly; him that, till that hour, is totally ungodly,—full of all evil, void of all good: (2.) That he justifies the ungodly that worketh not; that, till that moment, worketh no good work;

—neither can he; for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit: (3.) That he justifies him by faith alone, without any goodness or righteousness preceding: and, (4.) That faith is then counted to him for righteousness; namely, for preceding righteousness; that is, God through the merits of Christ, accepts him that believes, as if he had already fulfilled all righteousness. But what is all this to your point? The apostle does not say, either here or elsewhere, that this faith is counted to him for *subsequent righteousness*. He does teach that there is no righteousness *before* faith; but where does he teach that there is none *after it?* He does assert, holiness cannot *precede* justification; but not, that it need not *follow* it. St. Paul, therefore, gives you no colour for making void the law, by teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness.

III. 1. There is yet another way of making void the law through faith, which is more common than either of the former: and that is, the doing it practically; the making it void in *fact*, though not in *principle;* the *living* as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness.

How earnestly does the apostle guard us against this, in those well-known words: "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid:" (Rom. vi. 15:) a caution which it is needful thoroughly to consider, because it is of the last importance.

2. The being "under the law" may here mean, (1.) The being obliged to observe the ceremonial law: (2.) The being obliged to conform to the whole Mosaic institution: (3.) The being obliged to keep the whole moral law, as the condition of our acceptance with God: and, (4.) The being under the wrath and curse of God; under sentence of eternal death; under a sense of guilt and condemnation, full of horror and slavish fear.

3. Now, although a believer is "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," yet from the moment

he believes, he is not "under the law," in any of the preceding senses. On the contrary, he is "under grace," under a more benign, gracious dispensation. As he is no longer under the ceremonial law, nor under the Mosaic institution; as he is not obliged to keep even the moral law, as the condition of his acceptance; so he is delivered from the wrath and the curse of God, from all sense of guilt and condemnation, and from all that horror and fear of death and hell whereby he was all his life before subject to bondage. And he now performs (which while "under the law" he could not do) a willing and universal obedience. He obeys, not from the motive of slavish fear, but on a nobler principle; namely, the grace of God ruling in his heart, and causing all his works to be wrought in love.

4. What then? Shall this evangelical principle of action be less powerful than the legal? Shall we be less obedient to God from filial love than we were from servile fear?

It is well if this is not a common case; if this practical Antinomianism, this unobserved way of making void the law through faith, has not infected thousands of believers.

Has it not infected you? Examine yourself honestly and closely. Do you not do now what you durst not have done when you was "under the law," or (as we commonly call it) under conviction? For instance: You durst not then indulge yourself in food: you took just what was needful, and that of the cheapest kind. Do you not allow yourself more latitude now? Do you not indulge yourself a *little* more than you did? Oh, beware lest you "sin because you are not under the law, but under grace!"

5. When you was under conviction, you durst not indulge the lust of the eye in any degree. You would not do any thing, great or small, merely to gratify your curiosity. You regarded only cleanliness and necessity, or at most very moderate convenience, either in furniture or apparel; superfluity and finery of whatever kind, as

well as fashionable elegance, were both a terror and an abomination to you.

Are they so still? Is your conscience as tender now in these things as it was then? Do you still follow the same rule both in furniture and apparel, trampling all finery, all superfluity, every thing useless, every thing merely ornamental, however fashionable, under foot? Rather, have you not resumed what you had once laid aside, and what you could not then use without wounding your conscience? And have you not learned to say, "Oh, I am not so scrupulous now?" I would to God you were! Then you would not *sin* thus, "because you are not under the law, but under grace!"

6. You was once scrupulous too of commending any to their face; and still more, of suffering any to commend you. It was a stab to your heart; you could not bear it; you sought the honour that cometh of God only. You could not endure such conversation; nor any conversation which was not good to the use of edifying. All idle talk, all trifling discourse, you abhorred; you hated as well as feared it; being deeply sensible of the value of time, of every precious, fleeting moment. In like manner, you dreaded and abhorred idle expense; valuing your money only less than your time; and trembling lest you should be found an unfaithful steward, even of the mammon of unrighteousness.

Do you now look upon praise as deadly poison, which you can neither give nor receive but at the peril of your soul? Do you still dread and abhor all conversation which does not tend to the use of edifying; and labour to improve every moment, that it may not pass without leaving you better than it found you? Are not you less careful as to the expense both of money and time? Cannot you now lay out either, as you could not have done once? Alas! how has that "which should have been for your health, proved to you an occasion of falling!" How have you "sinned because you was not under the law, but under grace!"

7. God forbid you should any longer continue thus to "turn the grace of God into lasciviousness!" Oh, remember how clear and strong a conviction you once had concerning all these things! And, at the same time, you was fully satisfied from whom that conviction came. The world told you, you was in a delusion; but you knew it was the voice of God. In these things you was not too scrupulous then; but you are not now scrupulous enough. God keep you longer in that painful school, that you might learn those great lessons the more perfectly. And have you forgot them already? Oh, recollect them before it is too late! Have you suffered so many things in vain? I trust it is not yet in vain. Now use the conviction without the pain! Practise the lesson without the rod! Let not the mercy of God weigh less with you now, than his fiery indignation did before. Is love a less powerful motive than fear? If not, let it be an invariable rule, "I will do nothing now I am 'under grace,' which I durst not have done when 'under the law.'"

8. I cannot conclude this head without exhorting you to examine yourself, likewise, touching sins of omission. Are you as clear of these, now you "are under grace" as you was when "under the law?" How diligent was you then in hearing the word of God! Did you neglect any opportunity? Did you not attend thereon day and night? Would a small hinderance have kept you away? a little business? a visitant? a slight indisposition? a soft bed? a dark or cold morning?—Did not you then fast often; or use abstinence to the uttermost of your power? Was not you much in prayer, (cold and heavy as you was,) while you was hanging over the mouth of hell? Did you not speak and not spare even for an unknown God? Did you not boldly plead his cause?—reprove sinners?—and avow the truth before an adulterous generation? And are you now a believer in Christ? Have you the faith that overcometh the world? What! and are you less zealous for your Master now, than you was when you knew him not? less dili-

gent in fasting, in prayer, in hearing his word, in calling sinners to God? Oh, repent! See and feel your grievous loss! Remember from whence you are fallen! Bewail your unfaithfulness! Now be zealous and do the first works; lest, if you continue to "make void the law through faith," God cut you off, and appoint you your portion with the unbelievers!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXV.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is St. Paul's proposition in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What objection is easily foreseen?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is strangely imagined by some persons?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) Is this view universal? Who are they that contend that the apostle makes void the law?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is said of their zeal?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) What does it behoove all to do?

Ques. 7. (I. 1.) What are we first to inquire?

Ques. 8. (I. 2.) From what does this opposition to the law proceed?

Ques. 9. (I. 3.) What is this grand plea?

Ques. 10. (I. 4.) Is it allowable to offer Christ to the careless sinner?

Ques. 11. (I. 5.) What does the apostle say?

Ques. 12. (I. 6.) How does St. Paul's first sermon conclude? Where is it recorded?

Ques. 13. (I. 7.) What does he say in his next discourse?

Ques. 14. (I. 8.) What did he say to the jailer in Philippi?

Ques. 15. (I. 9.) What answer is made here to the statement that St. Paul preached Christ in a different manner in his Epistles?

Ques. 16. (I. 10.) What is plainly seen from this statement?

Ques. 17. (I. 11.) What should we consider well?

Ques. 18. (I. 12.) What objection is here noticed, and how answered?

Ques. 19. (II. 1.) What is a second way of making void the law?

Ques. 20. (II. 2.) What do others suppose?

Ques. 21 (II. 3.) What is their first plea?

Ques. 22. (II. 4.) Were men at one time more obliged to obey the law than they are now?

Ques. 23. (II. 5.) What objection is here answered?

Ques. 24. (II. 6.) Where is the truth to be found?

Ques. 25. (II. 7.) What objection is here noticed?

Ques. 26. (III. 1.) What other way of making void the law is noticed?

Ques. 27. (III. 2.) What does "under the law" mean?

Ques. 28. (III. 3.) How is a believer related to the law?

Ques. 29. (III. 4.) What is said of obedience from filial love?

Ques. 30. (III. 5.) What restraints follow conviction of sin?

Ques. 31. (III. 6.) What honor was then sought?

Ques. 32. (III. 7.) What exhortation have we here?

Ques. 33. (III. 8.) How does this head conclude?

SERMON XXXVI.

THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH.

DISCOURSE II.

"*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*"—Rom. iii. 31.

1. It has been shown, in the preceding discourse, which are the most usual ways of making void the law through faith; namely, first, the not preaching it at all; which effectually makes it all void at a stroke; and this under colour of preaching Christ and magnifying the gospel, though it be, in truth, destroying both the one and the other:—secondly, the teaching, (whether directly or indirectly,) that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness; that this is less necessary now, or a less degree of it necessary, than before Christ came; that it is less necessary to us, because we believe, than otherwise it would have been; or, that Christian liberty is a liberty from any kind or degree of holiness: (so perverting those great truths, that we are now under the covenant of grace, and not of works; that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; and that "to him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness:")—or, thirdly, the doing this practically; the making void the law in practice, though not in principle; the living or acting as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness; the allowing ourselves in sin, "because we are not under the law, but under grace." It remains to inquire, how we may follow a better pattern; how we may be able to say, with the apostle, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

2. We do not, indeed, establish the old ceremonial law: we know that is abolished for ever. Much less do we establish the whole Mosaic dispensation; this we know our Lord has nailed to his cross. Nor yet do we so establish the moral law, (which it is to be feared too many do,) as if the fulfilling it, the keeping all the commandments, were the condition of our justification: if it were so, surely "in his sight should no man living be justified." But all this being allowed, we still, in the apostle's sense, "establish the law," the moral law.

I. 1. We establish the law, first, by our doctrine; by endeavouring to preach it in its whole extent, to explain and enforce every part of it, in the same manner as our great Teacher did while upon earth. We establish it by following St. Peter's advice: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;" as the holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost, spoke and wrote for our instruction; and as the apostles of our blessed Lord, by the direction of the same Spirit. We establish it whenever we speak in his name, by keeping back nothing from them that hear; by declaring to them, without any limitation or reserve, the whole counsel of God. And in order the more effectually to establish it, we use herein great plainness of speech. "We are not as many, that *corrupt* the word of God;" καπηλευοντες; (as artful men their bad wines;)—we do not *cauponize*, *mix*, *adulterate*, or *soften* it, to make it suit the taste of the hearers; "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ;" as having no other aim than "by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

2. We then, by our doctrine, establish the law, when we thus openly declare it to all men; and that in the fulness wherein it is delivered by our blessed Lord and his apostles; when we publish it in the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. We then establish the law, when we declare every part of it, every commandment contained therein, not only in its full,

literal sense, but likewise in its spiritual meaning; not only with regard to the outward actions, which it either forbids or enjoins, but also with respect to the inward principle, to the thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

3. And indeed this we do the more diligently, not only because it is of the deepest importance;—inasmuch as all the fruit, every word and work, must be only evil continually, if the tree be evil, if the dispositions and tempers of the heart be not right before God;—but likewise, because, as important as these things are, they are little considered or understood,—so little, that we may truly say of the law too, when taken in its full spiritual meaning, it is "a mystery which was hid from ages and generations since the world began." It was utterly hid from the heathen world. They, with all their boasted wisdom, neither found out God, nor the law of God; not in the letter, much less in the spirit of it. "Their foolish hearts were" more and more "darkened;" while "professing themselves wise, they became fools." And it was almost equally hid, as to its spiritual meaning, from the bulk of the Jewish nation. Even these, who were so ready to declare concerning others, "This people that knoweth not the law are cursed," pronounced their own sentence therein, as being under the same curse, the same dreadful ignorance. Witness our Lord's continual reproof of the wisest among them, for their gross misinterpretations of it. Witness the supposition almost universally received among them, that they needed only to make clean the outside of the cup; that the paying tithe of mint, anise, and cummin,—outward exactness,—would atone for inward unholiness, for the total neglect both of justice and mercy, of faith and the love of God. Yea, so absolutely was the spiritual meaning of the law hidden from the wisest of them, that one of their most eminent Rabbis comments thus on those words of the Psalmist, "If I incline unto iniquity with my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" "That is," saith he, "if it be only in my

heart, if I do not commit outward wickedness, the Lord will not regard it, he will not punish me, unless I proceed to the outward act!"

4. But, alas! the law of God, as to its inward spiritual meaning, is not hid from the Jews or heathens only, but even from what is called the Christian world; at least, from a vast majority of them. The spiritual sense of the commandments of God is still a mystery to these also. Nor is this observable only in those lands which are overspread with Romish darkness and ignorance: but this is too sure, that the far greater part even of those who are called *Reformed Christians* are utter strangers at this day to the law of Christ in the purity and spirituality of it.

5. Hence it is that to this day "the Scribes and Pharisees," the men who have the form but not the power of religion, and who are generally wise in their own eyes, and righteous in their own conceits,—"hearing these things, are offended;" are deeply offended, when we speak of the religion of the heart; and particularly when we show, that, without this, were we to "give all our goods to feed the poor," it would profit us nothing. But offended they must be; for we cannot but speak the truth as it is in Jesus. It is our part, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, to deliver our own soul. All that is written in the book of God we are to declare, not as pleasing men, but the Lord. We are to declare, not only all the promises, but all the threatenings too, which we find therein. At the same time that we proclaim all the blessings and privileges which God hath prepared for his children, we are likewise to "teach all the things whatsoever he hath commanded." And we know that all these have their use; either for the awakening those that sleep, the instructing the ignorant, the comforting the feeble-minded, or the building up and perfecting of the saints. We know that "all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable," either "for doctrine," "or for reproof;" either "for correction, or for instruction in

righteousness;" and that "the man of God," in the process of the work of God in his soul, has need of every part thereof, that he may at length "be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

6. It is our part thus to preach Christ, by preaching all things whatsoever he hath revealed. We may indeed, without blame, yea, and with a peculiar blessing from God, declare the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; we may speak, in a more especial manner, of "the Lord our righteousness;" we may expatiate upon the grace of God in Christ, "reconciling the world unto himself;" we may, at proper opportunities, dwell upon his praise, as "bearing the iniquities of us all, as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed:"—but still we should not preach Christ according to his word, if we were wholly to confine ourselves to this: we are not ourselves clear before God, unless we proclaim him in all his offices. To preach Christ, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, is to preach him, not only as our great High Priest, "taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God;" as such "reconciling us to God by his blood," and "ever living to make intercession for us;"—but likewise as the prophet of the Lord, "who of God is made unto us wisdom;" who, by his word and his Spirit, is with us always, "guiding us into all truth:"—yea, and as remaining a King for ever; as giving laws to all whom he has bought with his blood; as restoring those to the image of God, whom he had first reinstated in his favour; as reigning in all believing hearts" until he has subdued all things to himself,"—until he hath utterly cast out all sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

II. 1. We establish the law, secondly, when we so preach faith in Christ as not to supersede, but produce, holiness; to produce all manner of holiness, negative and positive, of the heart and of the life.

In order to this, we continually declare, (what should be frequently and deeply considered by all who would

not "make void the law through faith,") that faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone: love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth flee away; for "love" alone "never faileth." Faith will totally fail; it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God. But even then love,—

> "Its nature and its office still the same,
> Lasting its lamp, and unconsumed its flame,—
> In deathless triumph shall for ever live,
> And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

2. Very excellent things are spoken of faith; and whosoever is a partaker thereof may well say, with the apostle, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." Yet still it loses all its excellence when brought into a comparison with love. What St. Paul observes concerning the superior glory of the gospel, above that of the law, may, with great propriety, be spoken of the superior glory of love, above that of faith: "Even that which was made glorious hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more doth that which remaineth exceed in glory." Yea, all the glory of faith, before it is done away, arises hence, that it ministers to love; it is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end.

3. Let those who magnify faith beyond all proportion, so as to swallow up all things else, and who so totally misapprehend the nature of it as to imagine it stands in the place of love, consider further, that as love will exist after faith, so it did exist long before it. The angels who, from the moment of their creation, beheld the face of their Father that is in heaven, had no occa-

sion for faith, in its general notion, as it is the evidence of things not seen. Neither had they need of faith, in its more particular acceptation, faith in the blood of Jesus: for he took not upon him the nature of angels; but only the seed of Abraham. There was, therefore, no place before the foundation of the world for faith, either in the general or particular sense. But there was for love. Love existed from eternity in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation: they received at once, from their gracious Creator, to exist and to love.

4. Nor is it certain, (as ingeniously and plausibly as many have descanted upon this,) that faith, even in the general sense of the word, had any place in paradise. It is highly probable, from that short and uncircumstantial account which we have in holy writ, that Adam, before he rebelled against God, walked with him by sight, and not by faith.

> "For then his reason's eye was strong and clear,
> And (as an eagle can behold the sun)
> Might have beheld his Maker's face as near
> As th' intellectual angels could have done."

He was then able to talk with Him face to face, whose face we cannot now see and live; and consequently had no need of that faith, whose office it is to supply the want of sight.

5. On the other hand, it is absolutely certain, faith, in its particular sense, had then no place. For in that sense, it necessarily presupposes sin, and the wrath of God declared against the sinner; without which there is no need of an atonement for sin, in order to the sinner's reconciliation with God. Consequently, as there was no need of an atonement before the fall, so there was no place for faith in that atonement; man being then pure from every stain of sin; holy as God is holy. But love even then filled his heart; it reigned in him without a rival, and it was only when love was lost by sin, that faith was added, not for its own sake, nor with any design that it should exist any longer than until it

had answered the end for which it was ordained,—namely, to restore man to the love from which he was fallen. At the fall, therefore, was added this evidence of things unseen, which before was utterly needless; this confidence in redeeming love, which could not possibly have any place till the promise was made, that "the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

6. Faith, then, was originally designed of God to re-establish the law of love. Therefore, in speaking thus, we are not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due praise; but on the contrary, showing its real worth, exalting it in its just proportion, and giving it that very place which the wisdom of God assigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself, (as neither is any other means whatsoever,) yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts; and as, in the present state of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it; it is on that account an unspeakable blessing to man, and of unspeakable value before God.

III. 1. And this naturally brings us to observe, thirdly, the most important way of establishing the law; namely, the establishing it in our own hearts and lives. Indeed, without this, what would all the rest avail? We might establish it by our doctrine; we might preach it in its whole extent; might explain and enforce every part of it; we might open it in its most spiritual meaning, and declare the mysteries of the kingdom; we might preach Christ in all his offices, and faith in Christ as opening all the treasures of his love; and yet all this time, if the law we preached were not established in our hearts, we should be of no more account before God than "sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals:" all our preaching would be so far from profiting ourselves, that it would only increase our damnation.

2. This is, therefore, the main point to be considered, —How may we establish the law in our own hearts,

so that it may have its full influence on our lives? And this can only be done by faith.

Faith alone it is which effectually answers this end, as we learn from daily experience. For so long as we walk by faith, not by sight, we go swiftly on in the way of holiness. While we steadily look, not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, we are more and more crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. Let but the eye of the soul be constantly fixed, not on the things which are temporal, but on those which are eternal, and our affections are more and more loosened from earth, and fixed on things above. So that faith, in general, is the most direct and effectual means of promoting all righteousness and true holiness; of establishing the holy and spiritual law in the hearts of them that believe.

3. And by faith, taken in its more particular meaning, for a confidence in a pardoning God, we establish his law in our own hearts, in a still more effectual manner. For there is no motive which so powerfully inclines us to love God, as the sense of the love of God in Christ. Nothing enables us like a piercing conviction of this to give our hearts to Him who was given for us. And from this principle of grateful love to God arises love to our brother also. Neither can we avoid loving our neighbour, if we truly believe the love wherewith God hath loved us. Now this love to man, grounded on faith, and love to God, "worketh no ill to" our "neighbour:" consequently, it is, as the apostle observes, "the fulfilling of the" whole negative "law." "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not steal: Thou shalt not bear false witness: Thou shalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Neither is love content with barely working no evil to our neighbour. It continually incites us to do good, as we have time and opportunity; to do good, in every possible kind, and in every possible degree, to all men. It is,

therefore, the fulfilling of the positive, likewise, as well as of the negative, law of God.

4. Nor does faith fulfil either the negative or positive law as to the external part only; but it works inwardly by love, to the purifying of the heart, the cleansing it from all vile affections. Every one that hath this faith in himself, "purifieth himself even as He is pure;"—purifieth himself from every earthly, sensual desire; from all vile and inordinate affections; yea, from the whole of that carnal mind which is enmity against God. At the same time, if it have its perfect work, it fills him with all goodness, righteousness, and truth. It brings all heaven into his soul; and causes him to walk in the light, even as God is in the light.

5 Let us thus endeavour to establish the law in ourselves; not sinning "because we are under grace," but rather using all the power we receive thereby, "to fulfil all righteousness." Calling to mind what light we received from God while his Spirit was convincing us of sin, let us beware we do not put out that light: what we had then attained let us hold fast. Let nothing induce us to build again what we have destroyed; to resume any thing, small or great, which we then clearly saw was not for the glory of God, or the profit of our own soul; or to neglect any thing, small or great, which we could not then neglect without a check from our own conscience. To increase and perfect the light which we had before, let us now add the light of faith. Confirm we the former gift of God by a deeper sense of whatever he had then shown us; by a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more exquisite sensibility of sin. Walking now with joy, and not with fear, in a clear, steady sight of things eternal, we shall look on pleasure, wealth, praise, all the things of earth, as on bubbles upon the water; counting nothing important, nothing desirable, nothing worth a deliberate thought, but only what is "within the veil," where Jesus "sitteth at the right hand of God."

6. Can *you* say, "Thou art merciful to my unright-

eousness; my sins thou rememberest no more?" Then, for the time to come, see that you fly from sin, as from the face of a serpent! For how exceeding sinful does it appear to you now! how heinous above all expression! On the other hand, in how amiable a light do you now see the holy and perfect will of God! Now, therefore, labour that it may be fulfilled, both in you, by you, and upon you. Now watch and pray, that you may sin no more; that you may see and shun the least transgression of his law! You see the motes which you could not see before, when the sun shines into a dark place. In like manner, you see the sins which you could not see before, now the Sun of Righteousness shines in your heart. Now, then, do all diligence to walk, in every respect according to the light you have received. Now be zealous to receive more light daily, more of the knowledge and love of God, more of the Spirit of Christ, more of his life and of the power of his resurrection. Now use all the knowledge, and love, and life, and power you have already attained. So shall you continually go on from faith to faith; so shall you daily increase in holy love, till faith is swallowed up in sight, and the law of love is established to all eternity.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXVI.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What was shown in the preceding discourse?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said of the ceremonial law?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) How do we first establish the law?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) Is it established also by declaring it to all men?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) Why must this be done the more diligently?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) From whom is the spiritual meaning hid?

Ques. 7. (I. 5.) What follows from this?

Ques. 8. (I. 6.) What is our duty in preaching Christ?

Ques. 9. (II. 1.) How do we establish the law, secondly?

Ques. 10. (II. 2.) What is said of faith?

Ques. 11. (II. 3.) What ought those to consider who unduly magnify it?

Ques. 12. (II. 4.) Had faith any place in paradise?

Ques. 13. (II. 5.) What further argument is here used?

Ques. 14. (II. 6.) What was faith originally designed to do?

Ques. 15. (III. 1.) What is observed thirdly?

Ques. 16. (III. 2.) What is the main point to be considered?

Ques. 17. (III. 3.) How do we establish the law in our own hearts?

Ques. 18. (III. 4.) How does faith establish the law inwardly as well as outwardly?

Ques. 19. (III. 5.) What are we here exhorted to do?

Ques. 20. (III. 6.) What question is here asked?

Ques. 21. (III. 6.) How do we furnish proof of the divine forgiveness?

Ques. 22. (III. 6.) How does the holy and perfect will of God appear to those who have passed from death unto life?

Ques. 23. (III. 7.) How does this discourse conclude?

Ques. 24. What was the occasion which produced these sermons on the law established by faith? See Introductory Notes to Sermons XXXV.–XXXVI. Let the student consider carefully the causes which produced the celebrated "Minutes" of 1770 as they are given in these Notes.

SERMON XXXVII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In the early days of Methodism one of the principal charges brought against it was that of *enthusiasm*. In the mouths of the great majority of opposers the word simply meant hostility to the work of the great revival of religion. Indeed, there was scarcely one of Mr. Wesley's opposers who could give a sensible definition of the word. An enthusiast was said to be one who looked for the end without using the means. This definition certainly did not apply to the Methodists, for they were charged at the same time, and by the same persons, with making too much of the means of salvation. For this they were branded as *legalists*, men who were striving to restore the bondage of the law of works.

On the other hand, we find the Methodists cautioning their members against the doctrine that "one is not to do good unless his heart is free to it." This teaching they call an *enthusiastic* doctrine. In other words, they mean that we are not to make *feeling* the criterion of *duty*. Against the errors of the real enthusiasts Mr. Wesley was compelled lift up his voice with energy and decision. He was sometimes at a loss to determine, in particular cases, whether persons claiming to have experienced extraordinary dispensations of the Holy Spirit were themselves deceived, or endeavoring to deceive others. He was cautious, both in accepting and in rejecting these experiences. In many of them there was a modicum of truth; in most of them there were circumstances which produced doubt and suspicion.

The reader of Mr. Wesley's Journals must always keep in

mind the essential nature of a diary, or daily record of one's thoughts and opinions. These opinions are of necessity *ex parte*, given on the first occasion, and without considering the other side of the question. Even statements of facts of which he was not an eye-witness must be considered as open to revision or further information which may change the whole aspect of the question. It is in his matured essays and sermons that Mr. Wesley records his own opinions, and it is only fair to judge him by these.

In this sermon we have a clear, concise, and satisfactory treatment of the subject of enthusiasm. In the nature of the case, every great revival of religion will give occasion to dangers from the excitable and ill-balanced minds of well-meaning people. Especially is this caution to be regarded when the subject of holiness, or Christian perfection, receives an absorbing degree of attention. Words are spoken and sentiments uttered that would be disowned in cooler moments, and the cause of true scriptural holiness receives great damage in consequence of these ill-advised speeches.

As in most great questions of controversy, the truth lies in the midddle way between all extremes. To trust in the performance of a few outward duties in obedience to ordinances and in observance of sacraments is a real enthusiasm, for it is the expectation of gaining the end of Christian hope and life without the use of the means prescribed in the gospel. On the other hand, the exaltation of feeling, of frames of mind, and the demand for extravagant and supremely confident expressions of personal religious experience, may become a snare or a stumbling-block to many persons whose natural temperament is inconsistent with these requirements.

The test of a daily walk and conversation before the world is the best, most reliable guide to the character of a Christian profession. Where the fruits of the Spirit abound there is the true liberty and the truthful evidence of a godly life. We should always be on our guard against giving discouragement to weak and timid disciples. They may be

driven out of the way by requiring them to employ any terms or phrases which express more than their consciences will justify. Against this species of enthusiasm the minister of the gospel will be required to exercise perpetual vigilance, but in periods of revival excitement he will find greater necessity to be on his guard. The work of the Spirit of God operates in unison with the temperament of the person, and there are many forms in which that work manifests itself in the life of the Church.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XXXVII.

This charge is brought against the religion of the heart, not against an outward decent form; especially against those who preach the witness and renewing power of the Holy Ghost. The term is of ambiguous meaning, and used sometimes in a good, sometimes in an indifferent, but oftener in a bad sense. It is in this sense a disorder of the mind, not folly, but madness, reasoning from delusive premises. This is religious madness.

Kinds of enthusiasm—

1. Those who imagine they have grace that they have not. Superficial conversions. Fiery worldly zeal mistaken for religion. Outward form mistaken for religion.

2. Those who imagine they have gifts which they have not. The power to work miracles. Miraculous inspiration in preaching or praying, as that God dictates the very words which they speak. Particular directions from God in trifling affairs, by visions, impressions, or sudden impulses. God does give directions, but by his Word, interpreted by reason and experience, the Holy Spirit giving us clearer light, and opens our minds to the convictions of truth. Seeking to know God's will by unscriptural and irrational methods is a breach of the third commandment.

3. Expecting to attain the end without the means; such as expecting to understand God's Word without the use of study and helps, or attempting to speak in public without premeditation.

4. Some reckon as enthusiasm the belief in a particular providence. For this, however, we have scriptural warrant. God's providence is universal as well as particular, and particular as well as universal.

Danger of enthusiasm. It begets pride obstinate self-confidence of spirit, and contempt of others.

Beware of the enthusiasm of the fiery, persecuting zealot, of the deluded man who fancies he is a Christian because of outward works, of those who fancy they have supernatural gifts, and despise the use of means

SERMON XXXVII.

THE NATURE OF ENTHUSIASM.

"*And Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself.*" Acts xxvi. 24.

1. And so say all the world, the men who know not God, of all that are of Paul's religion; of every one who is so a follower of him, as he was of Christ. It is true, there is a sort of religion, nay, and it is called Christianity too, which may be practised without any such imputation, which is generally allowed to be consistent with common sense;—that is, a religion of form: a round of outward duties, performed in a decent, regular manner. You may add orthodoxy thereto, a system of right opinions, yea, and some quantity of heathen morality; and yet not many will pronounce, that "much religion hath made you mad." But if you aim at the religion of the heart; if you talk of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" then it will not be long before your sentence is passed, "Thou art beside thyself."

2. And it is no compliment which the men of the world pay you herein. They, for once, mean what they say. They not only affirm, but cordially believe, that every man is beside himself, who says, "the love of God is shed abroad in" his "heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" and that God has enabled him to rejoice in Christ "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." If a man is indeed alive to God, and dead to all things here below; if he continually sees Him that is invisible, and accordingly walks by faith, and not by sight; then they account it a clear case: beyond all dispute, "much religion hath made him mad."

3. It is easy to observe, that the determinate thing

which the world account madness is, that utter contempt of all temporal things, and steady pursuit of things eternal; that divine conviction of things not seen; that rejoicing in the favour of God; that happy, holy love of God; and that testimony of his Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God;—that is, in truth, the whole spirit, and life, and power of the religion of Jesus Christ.

4. They will, however, allow, in other respects, the man acts and talks like one in his senses. In other things, he is a reasonable man: it is in these instances only his head is touched It is therefore acknowledged, that the madness under which he labours is of a particular kind; and accordingly they are accustomed to distinguish it by a particular name, "enthusiasm."

5. A term this, which is exceeding frequently used, which is scarce ever out of some men's mouths; and yet it is exceeding rarely understood, even by those who use it most. It may be, therefore, not unacceptable to serious men, to all who desire to understand what they speak or hear, if I endeavour to explain the meaning of this term,—to show what enthusiasm is. It may be an encouragement to those who are unjustly charged therewith; and may possibly be of use to some who are justly charged with it; at least, to others who might be so, were they not cautioned against it.

6. As to the word itself, it is generally allowed to be of Greek extraction. But whence the Greek word, ενθουσιασμος, is derived, none has yet been able to show. Some have endeavoured to derive it from εν Θεῳ, *in God;* because all enthusiasm has reference to him But this is quite forced; there being small resemblance between the word derived, and those they strive to derive it from. Others would derive it from εν θυσιᾳ, *in sacrifice;* because many of the enthusiasts of old were affected in the most violent manner during the time of sacrifice. Perhaps it is a fictitious word, invented from the noise which some of those made who were so affected.

7. It is not improbable, that one reason why this un-

couth word has been retained in so many languages was, because men were not better agreed concerning the meaning than concerning the derivation of it. They therefore adopted the Greek word, because they did not understand it: they did not translate it into their own tongues, because they knew not how to translate it; it having been always a word of a loose, uncertain sense, to which no determinate meaning was affixed.

8. It is not, therefore, at all surprising, that it is so variously taken at this day; different persons understanding it in different senses, quite inconsistent with each other. Some take it in a good sense, for a divine impulse or impression, superior to all the natural faculties, and suspending, for the time, either in whole or in part, both the reason and the outward senses. In this meaning of the word, both the prophets of old, and the apostles, were proper enthusiasts; being, at divers times, so filled with the Spirit, and so influenced by Him who dwelt in their hearts, that the exercise of their own reason, their senses, and all their natural faculties, being suspended, they were wholly actuated by the power of God, and "spake" only "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

9. Others take the word in an indifferent sense, such as is neither morally good nor evil: thus they speak of the enthusiasm of the poets; of Homer and Virgil in particular. And this a late eminent writer extends so far as to assert, there is no man excellent in his profession, whatsoever it be, who has not in his temper a strong tincture of enthusiasm. By "enthusiasm" these appear to understand, an uncommon vigour of thought, a peculiar fervour of spirit, a vivacity and strength not to be found in common men; elevating the soul to greater and higher things than cool reason could have attained.

10. But neither of these is the sense wherein the word "enthusiasm" is most usually understood. The generality of men, if no further agreed, at least agree thus far concerning it, that it is something evil: and

this is plainly the sentiment of all those who call the religion of the heart "enthusiasm." Accordingly, I shall take it, in the following pages, as an evil; a misfortune, if not a fault.

11. As to the nature of enthusiasm, it is undoubtedly a disorder of the mind; and such a disorder as greatly hinders the exercise of reason. Nay, sometimes it wholly sets it aside: it not only dims, but shuts the eyes of the understanding. It may, therefore well be accounted a species of madness; of madness rather than of folly: seeing a fool is properly one who draws wrong conclusions from right premises; whereas a madman draws right conclusions, but from wrong premises. And so does an enthusiast. Suppose his premises true, and his conclusions would necessarily follow. But here lies his mistake: his premises are false. He imagines himself to be what he is not: and therefore, setting out wrong, the farther he goes, the more he wanders out of the way.

12. Every enthusiast, then, is properly a madman. Yet his is not an ordinary, but a religious madness. By "religious," I do not mean, that it is any part of religion: quite the reverse. Religion is the spirit of a sound mind; and, consequently, stands in direct opposition to madness of every kind. But I mean, it has religion for its object; it is conversant about religion. And so the enthusiast is generally talking of religion, of God, or of the things of God; but talking in such a manner that every reasonable Christian may discern the disorder of his mind. Enthusiasm in general may then be described in some such manner as this: a religious madness arising from some falsely imagined influence or inspiration of God; at least, from imputing something to God which ought not to be imputed to him, or expecting something from God which ought not to be expected from him.

13. There are innumerable sorts of enthusiasm. Those which are most common, and for that reason most dangerous, I shall endeavour to reduce under a

few general heads, that they may be more easily understood and avoided.

The first sort of enthusiasm which I shall mention, is that of those who imagine they have the grace which they have not. Thus, some imagine, when it is not so, that they have redemption through Christ, "even the forgiveness of sins." These are usually such as "have no root in themselves;" no deep repentance, or thorough conviction. "Therefore they received the word with joy." And "because they have no deepness of earth," no deep work in their heart, therefore the seed "immediately springs up." There is immediately a superficial change, which, together with that light joy, striking in with the pride of their unbroken heart, and with their inordinate self-love, easily persuades them they have already "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."

14. This is properly an instance of the first sort of enthusiasm: it is a kind of madness, arising from the imagination that they have that grace which in truth they have not: so that they only deceive their own souls. Madness it may be justly termed: for the reasonings of these poor men are right, were their premises good; but as those are a mere creature of their own imagination, so all that is built on them falls to the ground. The foundation of all their reveries is this: they imagine themselves to have faith in Christ. If they had this, they would be "kings and priests to God;" possessed of "a kingdom which cannot be moved:" but they have it not; consequently, all their following behaviour is as wide of truth and soberness as that of the ordinary madman, who, fancying himself an earthly king, speaks and acts in that character.

15. There are many other enthusiasts of this sort Such, for instance, is the fiery zealot for religion; or, more properly, for the opinions and modes of worship which he dignifies with that name. This man, also, strongly imagines himself to be a believer in Jesus; yea, that he is a champion for the faith which was once

delivered to the saints. Accordingly, all his conduct is formed upon that vain imagination. And allowing his supposition to be just, he would have some tolerable plea for his behaviour; whereas now it is evidently the effect of a distempered brain, as well as of a distempered heart.

16. But the most common of all the enthusiasts of this kind are those who imagine themselves Christians, and are not. These abound, not only in all parts of our land, but in most parts of the habitable earth. That they are not Christians, is clear and undeniable, if we believe the oracles of God. For Christians are holy; these are unholy: Christians love God; these love the world: Christians are humble; these are proud: Christians are gentle; these are passionate: Christians have the mind which was in Christ; these are at the utmost distance from it. Consequently, they are no more Christians than they are archangels. Yet they imagine themselves so to be; and they can give several reasons for it: for they have been *called so* ever since they can remember; they were *christened* many years ago; they embrace the *Christian opinions*, vulgarly termed the Christian or catholic faith; they use the *Christian modes of worship*, as their fathers did before them; they live what is called a good *Christian life*, as the rest of their neighbours do. And who shall presume to think or say that these men are not Christians?—though without one grain of true faith in Christ, or of real, inward holiness; without ever having tasted the love of God, or been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost!"

17. Ah, poor self-deceivers! Christians ye are not But you are enthusiasts in a high degree. Physicians, heal yourselves! But first know your disease: your whole life is enthusiasm; as being all suitable to the imagination, that you have received that grace of God which you have not. In consequence of this grand mistake, you blunder on, day by day, speaking and acting under a character which does in no wise belong to you. Hence arises that palpable, glaring inconsist-

ency that runs through your whole behaviour; which is an awkward mixture of real heathenism and imaginary Christianity. Yet still, as you have so vast a majority on your side, you will always carry it by mere dint of numbers, "that you are the only men in your senses, and all are lunatics who are not as you are." But this alters not the nature of things. In the sight of God, and his holy angels, yea, and all the children of God upon earth, you are mere madmen, mere enthusiasts all! Are you not? Are you not "walking in a vain shadow," a shadow of religion, a shadow of happiness? Are you not still "disquieting yourselves in vain" with misfortunes as imaginary as your happiness or religion? Do you not fancy yourselves great or good? very knowing and very wise? How long? Perhaps till death brings you back to your senses, to bewail your folly for ever and ever!

18. A second sort of enthusiasm is that of those who imagine they have such gifts from God as they have not. Thus some have imagined themselves to be endued with a power of working miracles, of healing the sick by a word or a touch, of restoring sight to the blind; yea, even of raising the dead,—a notorious instance of which is still fresh in our own history. Others have undertaken to prophesy, to foretell things to come, and that with the utmost certainty and exactness. But a little time usually convinces these enthusiasts. When plain facts run counter to their predictions, experience performs what reason could not, and sinks them down into their senses.

19. To the same class belong those who, in preaching or prayer, imagine themselves to be so influenced by the Spirit of God, as, in fact, they are not. I am sensible indeed, that without Him we can do nothing, more especially in our public ministry; that all our preaching is utterly vain, unless it be attended with his power; and all our prayer, unless his Spirit therein help our infirmities. I know, if we do not both preach and pray by the Spirit, it is all but lost labour; seeing

the help that is done upon earth, He doeth it himself, who worketh all in all. But this does not affect the case before us. Though there is a real influence of the Spirit of God, there is also an imaginary one; and many there are who mistake the one for the other Many suppose themselves to be under that influence when they are not, when it is far from them. And many others suppose they are more under that influence than they really are. Of this number, I fear, are all they who imagine that God dictates the very words they speak; and that, consequently, it is impossible they should speak any thing amiss, either as to the matter or manner of it. It is well known how many enthusiasts of this sort also have appeared during the present century; some of whom speak in a far more authoritative manner than either St. Paul or any of the apostles.

20. The same sort of enthusiasm, though in a lower degree, is frequently found in men of a private character. They may likewise imagine themselves to be influenced or directed by the Spirit when they are not. I allow, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and that if ever we either think, speak, or act aright, it is through the assistance of that blessed Spirit. But how many impute things to him, or expect things from him, without any rational or scriptural ground! Such are they who imagine, they either do or shall receive *particular directions* from God, not only in points of importance, but in things of no moment; in the most trifling circumstances of life. Whereas in these cases God has given us our own reason for a guide; though never excluding the secret assistance of his Spirit.

21. To this kind of enthusiasm they are peculiarly exposed, who expect to be directed of God, either in spiritual things or in common life, in what is justly called an *extraordinary* manner: I mean, by visions or dreams, by strong impressions or sudden impulses on the mind. I do not deny, that God has, of old times, manifested his will in this manner; or, that he can do

so now: nay, I believe he does, in some very rare instances. But how frequently do men mistake herein! How are they misled by pride, and a warm imagination, to ascribe such impulses or impressions, dreams or visions, to God, as are utterly unworthy of him! Now this is all pure enthusiasm; all as wide of religion, as it is of truth and soberness.

22. Perhaps some may ask, "Ought we not then to inquire what is the will of God in all things? And ought not his will to be the rule of our practice?" Unquestionably it ought. But how is a sober Christian to make this inquiry? to know what is the will of God? Not by waiting for supernatural dreams; not by expecting God to reveal it in visions; not by looking for any *particular impressions* or sudden impulses on his mind: no; but by consulting the oracles of God. "To the law and to the testimony!" This is the general method of knowing what is "the holy and acceptable will of God."

23. "But how shall I know what is the will of God in such and such a particular case? The thing proposed is, in itself, of an indifferent nature, and so left undetermined in Scripture." I answer, The Scripture itself gives you a general rule applicable to all particular cases: "The will of God is our sanctification." It is his will that we should be inwardly and outwardly holy, that we should be good, and do good, in every kind and in the highest degree whereof we are capable. Thus far we tread upon firm ground. This is as clear as the shining of the sun. In order, therefore, to know what is the will of God in a particular case, we have only to apply this general rule.

24. Suppose, for instance, it were proposed to a reasonable man to marry, or to enter into a new business, in order to know whether this is the will of God, being assured, "It is the will of God concerning me, that I should be as holy and do as much good as I can," he has only to inquire, "In which of these states can I be most holy, and do the most good?" And this is to

be determined, partly by reason, and partly by experience. Experience tells him what advantages he has in his present state, either for being or doing good; and reason is to show, what he certainly or probably will have in the state proposed. By comparing these, he is to judge which of the two may most conduce to his being and doing good, and as far as he knows this, so far he is certain what is the will of God.

25. Meantime, the assistance of his Spirit is supposed, during the whole process of the inquiry. Indeed it is not easy to say, in how many ways that assistance is conveyed. He may bring many circumstances to our remembrance; may place others in a stronger and clearer light; may insensibly open our mind to receive conviction, and fix that conviction upon our heart. And to a concurrence of many circumstances of this kind, in favour of what is acceptable in his sight, he may superadd such an unutterable peace of mind, and so uncommon a measure of his love, as will leave us no possibility of doubting, that this, even this, is his will concerning us.

26. This is the plain, scriptural, rational way to know what is the will of God in a particular case. But considering how seldom this way is taken, and what a flood of enthusiasm must needs break in on those who endeavour to know the will of God by unscriptural, irrational ways; it were to be wished that the expression itself were far more sparingly used. The using it, as some do, on the most trivial occasions, is a plain breach of the third commandment. It is a gross way of taking the name of God in vain, and betrays great irreverence toward him. Would it not be far better, then, to use other expressions, which are not liable to such objections? For example: instead of saying, on any particular occasion, "I want to know what is the will of God;" would it not be better to say, "I want to know what will be most for my improvement, and what will make me most useful?" This way of speaking is clear and unexceptionable: it is putting the matter

on a plain scriptural issue, and that without any danger of enthusiasm.

27. A third very common sort of enthusiam (if it does not coincide with the former) is that of those who think to attain the end without using the means, by the immediate power of God. If, indeed, those means were providentially withheld, they would not fall under this charge. God can, and sometimes does, in cases of this nature, exert his own immediate power. But they who expect this when they have those means and will not use them, are proper enthusiasts. Such are they who expect to understand the holy Scriptures, without reading them, and meditating thereon; yea, without using all such helps as are in their power, and may probably conduce to that end. Such are they who designedly speak in the public assembly without any premeditation. I say "designedly;" because there may be such circumstances as, at some times, make it unavoidable. But whoever despises that great means of speaking profitably is so far an enthusiast.

28. It may be expected that I should mention what some have accounted a fourth sort of enthusiasm; namely, the imagining those things to be owing to the providence of God which are not owing thereto. But I doubt: I know not what things they are which are not owing to the providence of God; in ordering, or at least in governing, of which, this is not either directly or remotely concerned. I except nothing but sin; and even in the sins of others, I see the providence of God to me. I do not say his *general* providence; for this I take to be a sounding word, which means just nothing. And if there be a *particular* providence, it must extend to all persons and all things. So our Lord understood it, or he could never have said, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered;" and, "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without" the will of "your Father" which is in heaven. But if it be so, if God preside *universis tanquam singulis, et singulis tanquam universis;* "over the whole universe as over every single person,

and over every single person as over the whole universe;" what is it (except only our own sins) which we are not to ascribe to the providence of God? So that I cannot apprehend there is any room here for the charge of enthusiasm.

29. If it be said, The charge lies here, "When you impute *this* to Providence, you imagine yourself the peculiar favourite of Heaven:" I answer, You have forgot some of the last words I spoke: *Præsidet universis tanquam singulis;* "His providence is over all men in the universe, as much as over any single person." Do you not see that he who, believing this, imputes any thing which befalls him to Providence, does not therein make himself any more the favourite of Heaven, than he supposes every man under heaven to be? Therefore you have no pretence, upon this ground, to charge him with enthusiasm.

30. Against every sort of this it behoves us to guard with the utmost diligence; considering the dreadful effects it has so often produced, and which, indeed, naturally result from it. Its immediate offspring is pride; it continually increases this source from whence it flows; and hereby it alienates us more and more from the favour and from the life of God. It dries up the very springs of faith and love, of righteousness and true holiness; seeing all these flow from grace; but "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace" only "to the humble."

31. Together with pride, there will naturally arise an unadvisable and unconvincible spirit. So that into whatever error or fault the enthusiast falls, there is small hope of his recovery. For reason will have little weight with him (as has been frequently and justly observed) who imagines he is led by a higher guide,—by the immediate wisdom of God. And as he grows in pride, so he must grow in unadvisableness and in stubbornness also. He must be less and less capable of being convinced, less susceptible of persuasion; more and more attached to his own judgment and his own will, till he is altogether fixed and immovable.

32. Being thus fortified both against the grace of God, and against all advice and help from man, he is wholly left to the guidance of his own heart, and of the king of the children of pride. No marvel, then, that he is daily more rooted and grounded in contempt of all mankind, in furious anger, in every unkind disposition, in every earthly and devilish temper. Neither can we wonder at the terrible outward effects which have flowed from such dispositions in all ages; even all manner of wickedness, all the works of darkness, committed by those who call themselves Christians, while they wrought with greediness such things as were hardly named even among the heathens.

Such is the nature, such the dreadful effects, of that many-headed monster, Enthusiasm! From the consideration of which we may now draw some plain inferences, with regard to our own practice.

33. And, first, if enthusiasm be a term, though so frequently used, yet so rarely understood, take you care not to talk of you know not what; not to use the word till you understand it. As in all other points, so likewise in this, learn to think before you speak. First know the meaning of this hard word; and then use it, if need require.

34. But if so few, even among men of education and learning, much more among the common sort of men, understand this dark, ambiguous word, or have any fixed notion of what it means; then, secondly, beware of judging or calling any man an enthusiast, upon common report. This is by no means a sufficient ground for giving any name of reproach to any man: least of all is it a sufficient ground for so black a term of reproach as this. The more evil it contains, the more cautious you should be how you apply it to any one; to bring so heavy an accusation, without full proof, being neither consistent with justice nor mercy.

35. But if enthusiasm be so great an evil, beware you are not entangled therewith yourself. Watch and pray, that you fall not into the temptation. It easily

besets those who fear or love God. Oh beware you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do not imagine you have attained that grace of God which you have not attained. You may have much joy; you may have a measure of love; and yet not have living faith. Cry unto God, that he would not suffer you, blind as you are, to go out of the way; that you may never fancy yourself a believer in Christ, till Christ is revealed in you, and till his Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God.

36. Beware you are not a fiery, persecuting enthusiast. Do not imagine that God has called you (just contrary to the spirit of Him you style your Master) to destroy men's lives, and not to save them. Never dream of forcing men into the ways of God. Think yourself, and let think. Use no constraint in matters of religion. Even those who are farthest out of the way never compel to come in by any other means than reason, truth, and love.

37. Beware you do not run with the common herd of enthusiasts, fancying you are a Christian when you are not. Presume not to assume that venerable name, unless you have a clear scriptural title thereto; unless you have the mind which was in Christ, and walk as he also walked.

38. Beware you do not fall into the second sort of enthusiasm,—fancying you have those gifts from God which you have not. Trust not in vision or dreams; in sudden impressions, or strong impulses of any kind. Remember, it is not by these you are to know what is the will of God on any particular occasion, but by applying the plain Scripture rule, with the help of experience and reason, and the ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God. Do not lightly take the name of God in your mouth: do not talk of the will of God on every trifling occasion; but let your words, as well as your actions, be all tempered with reverence and godly fear.

39. Beware, lastly, of imagining you shall obtain the end without using the means conducive to it. God can

give the end without any means at all; but you have no reason to think he will. Therefore, constantly and carefully use all those means which he has appointed to be the ordinary channels of his grace. Use every means which either reason or Scripture recommends, as conducive (through the free love of God in Christ) either to the obtaining or increasing any of the gifts of God. Thus expect a daily growth in that pure and holy religion which the world always did, and always will, call "enthusiasm:" but which, to all who are saved from real enthusiasm, from merely nominal Christianity, is "the wisdom of God, and the power of God;" the glorious image of the Most High; "righteousness and peace;" a "fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life!"

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXVII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What do men say of those who are of Paul's religion?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Is this a compliment, or do they mean what they say?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is it that the world terms madness?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What do they allow in other respects?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is here said of the word enthusiasm?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) What is said of the origin of the word?

Ques. 7. (¶ 7.) Why is it probable that the word has been retained?

Ques. 8. (¶ 8.) How is the word taken by different persons at the present time?

Ques. 9. (¶ 9.) What is the sense of the word applied to the poets?

Ques. 10. (¶ 10.) What is the general sense of the word?

Ques. 11. (¶ 11.) What is the nature of enthusiasm?

Ques. 12. (¶ 12.) What, therefore, is an enthusiast?

Ques. 13. (¶ 13.) How many sorts of enthusiasm are there?

Ques. 14. (¶ 14.) What is here stated as an instance?

Ques. 15. (¶ 15.) To what class of enthusiasts do zealots belong?

Ques. 16. (¶ 16.) What is the most common class?

Ques. 17. (¶ 17.) How are they addressed?

Ques. 18. (¶ 18.) What is the second sort of enthusiasm?

Ques. 19. (¶ 19.) Who also belong to this class?

Ques. 20. (¶ 20.) What other class is here specified?

Ques. 21. (¶ 21.) To what kind of enthusiasm are they exposed?

Ques. 22. (¶ 22.) What may be asked by some?

Ques. 23. (¶ 23.) How is the question here stated, and how answered?

Ques. 24. (¶ 24.) How may we determine questions of duty?

Ques. 25. (¶ 25.) What is supposed in these directions?

Ques. 26. (¶ 26.) What error is here pointed out?

Ques. 27. (¶ 27.) What is a third kind of enthusiasm?

Ques. 28. (¶ 28.) What is said of a fourth kind?

Ques. 29. (¶ 29.) What charge is here mentioned?

Ques. 30. (¶ 30.) What is necessary to be guarded against?

Ques. 31. (¶ 31.) What arises in connection with pride?

Ques. 32. (¶ 32.) What is further said of this man?

Ques. 33. (¶ 33.) What caution is given?

Ques. 34. (¶ 34.) Why should ordinary men beware of judging?

Ques. 35. (¶ 35.) What exhortation is here given?

Ques. 36. (¶ 36.) What is said of a persecuting enthusiast?

Ques. 37. (¶ 37.) What caution have we here?

Ques. 38. (¶ 38.) What is here stated?

Ques. 39. (¶ 39.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XXXVIII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

The liberal spirit of Mr. Wesley is clearly manifested in this sermon. As far from bigotry as he was from a latitudinarian charity which makes no requirements of faith or practice, he was always ready to acknowledge the work of the Lord wherever seen. The necessity for cautioning his brethren against an exclusive spirit occurred very frequently, and he gives us in his "Plain Account of the People Called Methodists" the following statement of the course he pursued:

"The thing which I was greatly afraid of all this time, and which I resolved to use every possible method of preventing, was a *narrowness of spirit*, a party zeal, a being straitened in our bowels; that miserable bigotry which makes many so unready to believe that there is any work of God but among themselves. I thought it might be a help against this frequently to read to all who were willing to hear the accounts I received from time to time of the work which God is carrying on in the earth, both in our and other countries, not among us alone, but among those of various opinions and denominations. For all this I allotted one evening every month, and I find no cause to repent of my labor. It is generally a time of strong consolation to those who love God, and all mankind for his sake, as well as of breaking down the partition walls which either the craft of the devil or the folly of men has built up, and of encouraging every child of God to say (O when shall it once be!): 'Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'"

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XXXVIII.

History of this incident and its application to us.

I. In what sense men may, and do, now cast out devils. God dwells in the children of light; the devil in the children of darkness. This may be true, even in a physical sense, in some cases; it certainly is true spiritually with the great bulk of mankind. They do the works of the devil. Whoever, by the preaching of the gospel, leads men to repentance and to the knowledge of the truth does cast out the devil.

II. What do we understand by the expression, "He followeth not with us?"

1. He does not belong to our band of workers. 2. He is not of our party in the Church. 3. He does not agree with us in opinions. 4. He does not practice the same forms of worship. 5. He belongs to a Church anti-scriptural and anti-christian. 6. He may hate us as well as differ from us.

III. Explain our Lord's command, "Forbid him not."

1. We should have reasonable proof of his works. 2. If there is such, we should not hinder him. He may be a layman. We may think he is not sent of God, has no recognized call, is not ordained. But the practice of the apostles does not warrant our insisting on this. We should not hinder him by disparagement, nor by refusal to assist him.

IV. Beware of bigotry, which places our own party, opinion, Church, or religion, before the work of God. Especially must we beware of making the bigotry of others an excuse for our own.

SERMON XXXVIII

A CAUTION AGAINST BIGOTRY.

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not."—MARK ix. 38, 39.

1. IN the preceding verses we read, that after the twelve had been disputing "which of them should be the greatest, Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of these little children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me" only, "but him that sent me." Then "John answered," that is, said, with reference to what our Lord had spoken just before, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." As if he had said, "Ought we to have received him? In receiving him, should we have received thee? Ought we not rather to have forbidden him? Did not we do well therein?" "But Jesus said, Forbid him not."

2. The same passage is recited by St. Luke, and almost in the same words. But it may be asked, "What is this to us, seeing no man *now casts out devils?* Has not the power of doing this been withdrawn from the church, for twelve or fourteen hundred years? How then are *we* concerned in the case here proposed, or in our Lord's decision of it?"

3. Perhaps more nearly than is commonly imagined; the case proposed being no uncommon case. That we may reap our full advantage from it, I design to show, first, in what sense men may, and do, now cast out devils; secondly, what we may understand by, "He followeth not us." I shall, thirdly, explain our Lord's

direction, "Forbid him not;" and conclude with an inference from the whole.

I. 1. I am, in the first place, to show, in what sense men may, and do, now cast out devils.

In order to have the clearest view of this, we should remember, that (according to the scriptural account) as God dwells and works in the children of light, so the devil dwells and works in the children of darkness. As the Holy Spirit possesses the souls of good men, so the evil spirit possesses the souls of the wicked. Hence it is that the apostle terms him "the god of this world;" from the uncontrolled power he has over worldly men. Hence our blessed Lord styles him "the prince of this world;" so absolute is his dominion over it. And hence St. John: "We know that we are of God, and" all who are not of God, "the whole world," εν τῳ πονηρῳ κειται,—not *lieth in wickedness*, but "*lieth in the wicked one;*" lives and moves in him, as they who are not of the world do in God.

2. For the devil is not to be considered only as "a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour;" nor barely as a subtle enemy, who cometh unawares upon poor souls, and "leads them captive at his will;" but as he who dwelleth in them, and walketh in them; who ruleth the darkness or wickedness of this world, (of worldly men and all their dark designs and actions,) by keeping possession of their hearts, setting up his throne there, and bringing every thought into obedience to himself. Thus the "strong one armed keepeth his house;" and if this "unclean spirit" sometimes "go out of a man," yet he often returns with "seven spirits worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell there." Nor can he be idle in his dwelling. He is continually "working in" these "children of disobedience." He works in them with power, with mighty energy, transforming them into his own likeness, effacing all the remains of the image of God, and preparing them for every evil word and work.

3. It is, therefore, an unquestionable truth, that the god and prince of this world still possesses all who know not God. Only the manner wherein he possesses them

now differs from that wherein he did it of old time *Then*, he frequently tormented their bodies as well as souls, and that openly, without any disguise; *now* he torments their souls only, (unless in some rare cases,) and that as covertly as possible. The reason of this difference is plain: it was then his aim to drive mankind into superstition; therefore, he wrought as openly as he could. But it is his aim to drive us into infidelity; therefore, he works as privately as he can: for the more secret he is, the more he prevails.

4. Yet, if we may credit historians, there are countries, even now, where he works as openly as aforetime. "But why in savage and barbarous countries only? Why not in Italy, France, or England?" For a very plain reason: he knows his men; and he knows what he hath to do with each. To Laplanders he appears barefaced; because he is to fix them in superstition and gross idolatry. But with you he is pursuing a different point. He is to make you idolize yourselves; to make you wiser in your own eyes than God himself, than all the oracles of God. Now, in order to this, he must not appear in his own shape: that would frustrate his design. No: he uses all his art to make you deny his being, till he has you safe in his own place.

5. He reigns, therefore, although in a different way, yet as absolute in one land as in the other. He has the gay Italian infidel in his teeth, as sure as the wild Tartar. But he is fast asleep in the mouth of the lion, who is too wise to wake him out of sleep. So he only plays with him for the present; and, when he pleases, swallows him up!

The god of this world holds his English worshippers full as fast as those in Lapland. But it is not his business to affright them, lest they should fly to the God of heaven. The prince of darkness, therefore, does not appear, while he rules over these his willing subjects. The conqueror holds his captives so much the safer, because they imagine themselves at liberty. Thus "the strong one armed keepeth his house, and his goods are in peace;" neither the deist nor nominal Christian suspects he is there: so he and they are perfectly at peace with each other.

6. All this while he works with energy in them. He blinds the eyes of their understanding, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ cannot shine upon them. He chains their souls down to earth and hell, with the chains of their own vile affections. He binds them down to the earth, by love of the world, love of money, of pleasure, of praise. And by pride, envy, anger, hate, revenge, he causes their souls to draw nigh unto hell; acting the more secure and uncontrolled, because they know not that he acts at all.

7. But how easily may we know the cause from its effects! These are sometimes gross and palpable. So they were in the most refined of the heathen nations. Go no farther than the admired, the virtuous Romans; and you will find these, when at the height of their learning and glory, "filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, despiteful, proud, boasters, disobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

8. The strongest parts of this description are confirmed by one whom some may think a more unexceptionable witness. I mean, their brother heathen, Dion Cassius; who observes, that, before Cæsar's return from Gaul, not only gluttony and lewdness of every kind were open and barefaced; not only falsehood, injustice, and unmercifulness abounded, in public courts, as well as private families; but the most outrageous robberies, rapine, and murders were so frequent in all parts of Rome, that few men went out of doors without making their wills, as not knowing if they should return alive!

9. As gross and palpable are the works of the devil among many (if not all) the modern heathens. The natural religion of the Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and all other Indians bordering on our southern settlements, (not of a few single men, but of entire nations,) is to torture all their prisoners from morning till night, till at length they roast them to death; and upon the

slightest undesigned provocation, to come behind and shoot any of their own countrymen! Yea, it is a common thing among them, for the son, if he thinks his father lives too long, to knock out his brains; and for a mother, if she is tired of her children, to fasten stones about their necks, and throw three or four of them into the river, one after another!

10. It were to be wished, that none but heathens had practised such gross, palpable works of the devil. But we dare not say so. Even in cruelty and bloodshed, how little have the Christians come behind them! And not the Spaniards or Portuguese alone, butchering thousands in South America: not the Dutch only in the East Indies, or the French in North America, following the Spaniards step by step: our own countrymen, too, have wantoned in blood, and exterminated whole nations; plainly proving thereby what spirit it is that dwells and works in the children of disobedience.

11. These monsters might almost make us overlook the works of the devil that are wrought in our own country. But alas, we cannot open our eyes even here, without seeing them on every side. Is it a small proof of his power, that common swearers, drunkards, whoremongers, adulterers, thieves, robbers, sodomites, murderers, are still found in every part of our land? How triumphant does the prince of this world reign in all these children of disobedience!

12. He less openly but not less effectually, works in dissemblers, talebearers, liars, slanderers; in oppressors and extortioners; in the perjured, the seller of his friend, his honour, his conscience, his country. And yet these may talk of religion or conscience still; of honour, virtue, and public spirit! But they can no more deceive Satan than they can God. He likewise knows those that are his: and a great multitude they are, out of every nation and people, of whom he has full possession at this day

13. If you consider this, you cannot but see in what sense men may now also cast out devils: yea, and every minister of Christ does cast them out, if his Lord's work prosper in his hand.

By the power of God attending his word, he brings these sinners to repentance; an entire inward as well as outward change, from all evil to all good. And this is, in a sound sense, to cast out devils, out of the souls wherein they had hitherto dwelt. The strong one can no longer keep his house. A stronger than he is come upon him, and hath cast him out, and taken possession for himself, and made it an habitation of God through his Spirit. Here, then, the energy of Satan ends, and the Son of God "destroys the works of the devil." The understanding of the sinner is now enlightened, and his heart sweetly drawn to God. His desires are refined, his affections purified; and, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he grows in grace till he is not only holy in heart, but in all manner of conversation.

14. All this is indeed the work of God. It is God alone who can cast out Satan. But he is generally pleased to do this by man, as an instrument in his hand; who is then said to cast out devils in his name, by his power and authority. And he sends whom he will send upon this great work: but usually such as man would never have thought of; for "his ways are not as our ways, neither his thoughts as our thoughts." Accordingly he chooses the weak to confound the mighty; the foolish to confound the wise; for this plain reason, that he may secure the glory to himself; that "no flesh may glory in his sight."

II. 1. But shall we not forbid one who thus "casteth out devils," if "he followeth not us?" This, it seems, was both the judgment and practice of the apostle, till he referred the case to his Master. "We forbade him," saith he, "because he followeth not us;" which he supposed to be a very sufficient reason. What we may understand by this expression, "He followeth not us," is the next point to be considered.

The lowest circumstance we can understand thereby, is,—he has no outward connection with us. We do not labour in conjunction with each other. He is not our fellow-helper in the gospel. And, indeed, whensoever our Lord is pleased to send many labourers into his harvest, they cannot all act in subordination to, or con

nection with, each other. Nay, they cannot all have personal acquaintance with, nor be so much as known to one another. Many there will necessarily be, in different parts of the harvest, so far from having any mutual intercourse, that they will be as absolute strangers to each other, as if they had lived in different ages. And concerning any of these whom we know not, we may doubtless say, "He followeth not us."

2. A second meaning of this expression may be,—he is not of our party. It has long been matter of melancholy consideration to all who pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that so many several parties are still subsisting among those who are all styled Christians. This has been particularly observable in our own countrymen, who have been continually dividing from each other, upon points of no moment, and many times such as religion had no concern in. The most trifling circumstances have given rise to different parties, which have continued for many generations; and each of these would be ready to object to one who was on the other side, "He followeth not us."

3. That expression may mean, thirdly,—he differs from us in our religious opinions. There was a time when all Christians were of one mind, as well as of one heart; so great grace was upon them all, when they were first filled with the Holy Ghost! But how short a space did this blessing continue! How soon was that unanimity lost! and difference of opinion sprang up again, even in the church of Christ;—and that not in nominal but in real Christians; nay, in the very chief of them, the apostles themselves! Nor does it appear that the difference which then began was ever entirely removed. We do not find that even those pillars in the temple of God, so long as they remained upon the earth, were ever brought to think alike, to be of one mind, particularly with regard to the ceremonial law. It is therefore no way surprising, that infinite varieties of opinion should now be found in the Christian church. A very probable consequence of this is, that whenever we see any "casting out devils," he will be one that, in this sense, "followeth not us;" that is, not of our

opinion. It is scarce to be imagined he will be of our mind in all points, even of religion. He may very probably think in a different manner from us, even on several subjects of importance; such as the nature and use of the moral law, the eternal decrees of God, the sufficiency and efficacy of his grace, and the perseverance of his children

4. He may differ from us, fourthly, not only in opinion, but likewise in some point of practice. He may not approve of that manner of worshipping God which is practised in our congregation; and may judge that to be more profitable for his soul which took its rise from Calvin or Martin Luther. He may have many objections to that Liturgy which we approve of beyond all others; many doubts concerning that form of church government which we esteem both apostolical and scriptural. Perhaps he may go farther from us yet: he may, from a principle of conscience, refrain from several of those which we believe to be the ordinances of Christ. Or, if we both agree that they are ordained of God, there may still remain a difference between us, either as to the manner of administering those ordinances, or the persons to whom they should be administered. Now the unavoidable consequence of any of these differences will be, that he who thus differs from us must separate himself, with regard to those points, from our society. In this respect, therefore, "he followeth not us:" he is not (as we phrase it) "of our church."

5. But in a far stronger sense, "he followeth not us," who is not only of a different church, but of such a Church as we account to be in many respects anti-scriptural and anti-Christian;—a church which we believe to be utterly false and erroneous in her doctrines, as well as very dangerously wrong in her practice; guilty of gross superstition as well as idolatry;—a church that has added many articles to the faith which was once delivered to the saints; that has dropped one whole commandment of God, and made void several of the rest by her traditions; and that, pretending the highest veneration for, and strictest conformity to, the ancient church, has nevertheless brought in numberless innova-

tions, without any warrant either from antiquity or Scripture. Now, most certainly, "he followeth not us" who stands at so great a distance from us.

6. And yet there may be a still wider difference than this. He who differs from us in judgment or practice, may possibly stand at a greater distance from us in affection than in judgment. And this indeed is a very natural and a very common effect of the other. The differences which begin in points of opinion seldom terminate there. They generally spread into the affections, and then separate chief friends. Nor are any animosities so deep and irreconcilable as those that spring from disagreement in religion. For this cause the bitterest enemies of a man are those of his own household. For this the father rises against his own children, and the children against the father; and perhaps persecute each other even to the death, thinking all the time they are doing God service. It is therefore nothing more than we may expect, if those who differ from us, either in religious opinions or practice, soon contract a sharpness, yea, bitterness towards us; if they are more and more prejudiced against us, till they conceive as ill an opinion of our persons as of our principles. An almost necessary consequence of this will be, they will speak in the same manner as they think of us. They will set themselves in opposition to us, and, as far as they are able, hinder our work; seeing it does not appear to them to be the work of God, but either of man or of the devil. He that thinks, speaks, and acts in such a manner as this, in the highest sense, "followeth not us."

7. I do not indeed conceive, that the person of whom the apostle speaks in the text (although we have no particular account of him, either in the context, or in any other part of holy writ) went so far as this. We have no ground to suppose that there was any material difference between him and the apostles; much less that he had any prejudice either against them or their Master. It seems we may gather thus much from our Lord's own words, which immediately follow the text: "There is no man which shall do a miracle in my name,

that can lightly speak evil of me." But I purposely put the case in the strongest light, adding all the circumstances which can well be conceived; that, being forewarned of the temptation in its full strength, we may in no case yield to it, and fight against God.

III. 1. Suppose, then, a man have no intercourse with us, suppose he be not of our party, suppose he separate from our church, yea, and widely differ from us, both in judgment, practice, and affection; yet, if we see even this man "casting out devils," Jesus saith, "Forbid him not." This important direction of our Lord, I am, in the third place, to explain.

2. If we see this man casting out devils:—But it is well if, in such a case, we would believe even what we saw with our eyes, if we did not give the lie to our own senses. He must be little acquainted with human nature who does not immediately perceive how extremely unready we should be to believe that any man does cast out devils who "followeth not us" in all or most of the senses above recited: I had almost said, in any of them; seeing we may easily learn even from what passes in our own breasts, how unwilling men are to allow any thing good in those who do not in all things agree with themselves.

3. "But what is a sufficient, reasonable proof, that a man does (in the sense above) cast out devils?" The answer is easy. Is there full proof, (1.) That a person before us was a gross, open sinner? (2.) That he is not so now? that he has broke off his sins, and lives a Christian life? And, (3.) That this change was wrought by his hearing this man preach? If these three points be plain and undeniable, then you have sufficient, reasonable proof, such as you cannot resist without wilful sin, that this man casts out devils.

4. Then "forbid him not." Beware how you attempt to hinder him, either by your authority, or arguments, or persuasions. Do not in anywise strive to prevent his using all the power which God has given him. If you have authority with him, do not use that authority to stop the work of God. Do not furnish him with reasons why he ought not any more to speak in the name

of Jesus. Satan will not fail to supply him with these, if you do not second him therein. Persuade him not to depart from the work. If he should give place to the devil and you, many souls might perish in their iniquity, but their blood would God require at *your* hands.

5. "But what, if he be only a layman, who casts out devils! Ought I not to forbid him then?"

Is the fact allowed? Is there reasonable proof that this man has or does cast out devils? If there is, "forbid him not;" no, not at the peril of your soul. Shall not God work by whom he will work? No man can do these works unless God is with him; unless God hath sent him for this very thing. But if God hath sent him, will you call him back? Will you forbid him to go?

6. "But I do not know that he is sent of God." "Now herein is a marvellous thing," (may any of the seals of his mission say, any whom he hath brought from Satan to God,) "that ye know not whence this man is, and behold, he hath opened mine eyes! If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." If you doubt the fact, send for the parents of the man: send for his brethren, friends, acquaintance. But if you cannot doubt this, if you must needs acknowledge "that a notable miracle hath been wrought;" then with what conscience, with what face, can you charge him whom God hath sent, "not to speak any more in his name?"

7. I allow, that it is highly expedient, whoever preaches in his name should have an outward as well as an inward call; but that it is *absolutely necessary*, I deny.

"Nay, is not the Scripture express? 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' (Heb. v. 4.)"

Numberless times has this text been quoted on the occasion, as containing the very strength of the cause; but surely never was so unhappy a quotation. For, first, Aaron was not called to preach at all: he was called "to offer gifts and sacrifice for sin." That was his peculiar employment. Secondly, these men do not offer sacrifices at all, but only preach; which Aaron did not.

Therefore it is not possible to find one text in all the Bible which is more wide of the point than this.

8. "But what was the practice of the apostolic age?" You may easily see in the Acts of the Apostles. In the eighth chapter we read, "There was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." (Verse 1.) "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." (Verse 4.) Now, were all these outwardly called to preach? No man in his senses can think so. Here, then, is an undeniable proof, what was the practice of the apostolic age. Here you see not one, but a multitude of lay preachers, men that were only sent of God.

9. Indeed, so far is the practice of the apostolic age from inclining us to think it was *unlawful* for a man to preach before he was ordained, that we have reason to think it was then accounted *necessary*. Certainly the practice and the direction of the apostle Paul was, to *prove* a man before he was ordained at all. "Let these," (the deacons,) says he, "first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon." (1 Tim. iii. 10.) *Proved*, how? By setting them to construe a sentence of Greek, and asking them a few commonplace questions? Oh, amazing proof of a minister of Christ? Nay; but by making a clear, open trial, (as is still done by most of the Protestant churches of Europe,) not only whether their lives be holy and unblamable, but whether they have such gifts as are absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to edify the church of Christ.

10. But what if a man has these, and has brought sinners to repentance, and yet the bishop will not ordain him? Then the bishop does forbid him to cast out devils. But I dare not forbid him: I have published my reasons to all the world. Yet it is still insisted, I ought to do it. You who insist upon it, answer those reasons. I know not that any have done this yet, or even made an attempt of doing it. Only some have spoken of them as very weak and trifling: and this was prudent enough; for it

is far easier to despise, at least seem to despise, an argument, than to answer it. Yet, till this is done, I must say, When I have reasonable proof that any man does cast out devils, whatever others do, I dare not forbid him, lest I be found even to fight against God.

11. And whosoever thou art that fearest God, "forbid him not," either directly or indirectly. There are many ways of doing this. You indirectly forbid him, if you either wholly deny or despise, and make little account of, the work which God has wrought by his hands. You indirectly forbid him, when you discourage him in his work, by drawing him into disputes concerning it, by raising objections against it, or frighting him with consequences which very possibly will never be. You forbid him when you show any unkindness toward him either in language or behaviour; and much more when you speak of him to others either in an unkind or a contemptuous manner; when you endeavour to represent him to any either in an odious or a despicable light. You are forbidding him all the time you are speaking evil of him or making no account of his labours. Oh, forbid him not in any of these ways; nor by forbidding others to hear him,—by discouraging sinners from hearing that word which is able to save their souls!

12. Yea, if you would observe our Lord's direction in its full meaning and extent, then remember his word: "He that is not for us is against us; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth:" he that gathereth not men into the kingdom of God, assuredly scatters them from it. For there can be no neuter in this war. Every one is either on God's side, or on Satan's. Are you on God's side? Then you will not only not forbid any man that casts out devils, but you will labour, to the uttermost of your power, to forward him in the work. You will readily acknowledge the work of God, and confess the greatness of it. You will remove all difficulties and objections, as far as may be, out of his way. You will strengthen his hands by speaking honourably of him before all men, and avowing the things which you have seen and heard. You will encourage others

to attend upon his word, to hear him whom God hath sent. And you will omit no actual proof of tender love, which God gives you an opportunity of showing him.

IV. 1. If we willingly fail in any of these points, if we either directly or indirectly forbid him, "because he followeth not us," then we are bigots. This is the inference I draw from what has been said. But the term "bigotry," I fear, as frequently as it is used, is almost as little understood as "enthusiasm." It is too strong an attachment to, or fondness for, our own party, opinion, church, and religion. Therefore he is a bigot who is so fond of any of these, so strongly attached to them, as to forbid any who casts out devils because he differs from himself in any or all these particulars.

2. Do *you* beware of this. Take care, (1.) That you do not convict yourself of bigotry, by your unreadiness to believe that any man does cast out devils, who differs from you. And if you are clear thus far, if you acknowledge the fact, then examine yourself, (2.) Am I not convicted of bigotry in this, in forbidding him directly or indirectly? Do I not directly forbid him on this ground, because he is not of my party?—because he does not fall in with my opinions?—or, because he does not worship God according to that scheme of religion which I have received from my fathers?

3. Examine yourself, Do I not, indirectly at least, forbid him, on any of these grounds? Am I not sorry that God should thus own and bless a man that holds such erroneous opinions? Do I not discourage him, because he is not of my church, by disputing with him concerning it, by raising objections, and by perplexing his mind with distant consequences? Do I show no anger, contempt, or unkindness of any sort, either in my words or actions? Do I not mention behind his back, his (real or supposed) faults?—his defects or infirmities? Do I not hinder sinners from hearing his word? If you do any of these things, you are a bigot to this day.

4. "Search me, O Lord, and prove me. Try out my reins and my heart! Look well if there be any way

of" bigotry "in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." In order to examine ourselves thoroughly, let the case be proposed in the strongest manner. What, if I were to see a Papist, an Arian, a Socinian, casting out devils? If I did, I could not forbid even him, without convicting myself of bigotry. Yea, if it could be supposed that I should see a Jew, a Deist, or a Turk, doing the same, were I to forbid him either directly or indirectly, I should be no better than a bigot still.

5. Oh, stand clear of this! But be not content with not forbidding any that casts out devils. It is well to go thus far; but do not stop here. If you will avoid all bigotry, go on. In every instance of this kind, whatever the instrument be, acknowledge the finger of God. And not only acknowledge, but rejoice in his work, and praise his name with thanksgiving. Encourage whomsoever God is pleased to employ, to give himself wholly up thereto. Speak well of him wheresoever you are; defend his character and his mission. Enlarge, as far as you can, his sphere of action; show him all kindness in word and deed; and cease not to cry to God in his behalf, that he may save both himself and them that hear him.

6. I need add but one caution: Think not the bigotry of another is any excuse for your own. It is not impossible, that one who casts out devils himself, may yet forbid you so to do. You may observe, this is the very case mentioned in the text. The apostles forbade another to do what they did themselves. But beware of retorting. It is not your part to return evil for evil. Another's not observing the direction of our Lord, is no reason why you should neglect it. Nay, but let him have all the bigotry to himself. If he forbid *you*, do not you forbid *him*. Rather labour, and watch, and pray the more, to confirm your love toward him. If he speak all manner of evil of *you*, speak all manner of good (that is true) of *him*. Imitate herein that glorious saying of a great man, (Oh, that he had always breathed the same spirit!) "Let Luther call me a hundred devils; I will still reverence him as a messenger of God."

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXVIII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What do we read in the preceding verses?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What question is here propounded?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) How is it answered?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What does he design to show?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is shown in the first place?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) How is the devil to be considered?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What is said of the prince of this world?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) What is said by historians of certain countries?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) How does the devil reign in different lands?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) How does he work among the nations?

Ques. 11. (I. 7.) How can we know the cause of these things?

Ques. 12. (I. 8.) What is said of Dion Cassius?

Ques. 13. (I. 9.) What is said of the religion of American Indians?

Ques. 14. (I. 10.) What is said here of cruelty and bloodshed?

Ques. 15. (I. 11.) What is said of his own country?

Ques. 16. (I. 12.) How else does the devil work?

Ques. 17. (I. 13.) How can men cast out devils now?

Ques. 18. (I. 14.) Who alone is able to cast out Satan?

Ques. 19. (II. 1.) Ought we to forbid those who follow not us?

Ques. 20. (II. 2.) What may be a second meaning of this expression?

Ques. 21. (II. 3.) What may it mean thirdly?

Ques. 22. (II. 4.) How may he differ, fourthly?

Ques. 23. (II. 5.) How in a far stronger sense?

Ques. 24. (II. 6.) What wider difference may exist?

Ques. 25. (II. 7.) What is said of the person mentioned in the text?

Ques. 26. (III. 1.) What is here supposed?

Ques. 27. (III. 2.) What is here said of our unwillingness to see good in others?

Ques. 28. (III. 3.) What question is here stated, and how answered?

Ques. 29. (III. 4.) This being granted, what is our duty?

Ques. 30. (III. 5.) What if he be a layman?

Ques. 31. (III. 6.) What objection is here stated? How answered?

Ques. 32. (III. 7.) What is highly expedient?

Ques. 33. (III. 8.) What question is here answered?

Ques. 34. (III. 9.) What was the apostolic practice?

Ques. 35. (III. 10.) What is said of the Bishop's conduct?

Ques. 36. (III. 11–12.) What exhortation is here given?

Ques. 37. (IV. 1.) What is here said of bigotry?

Ques. 38. (IV. 2-3.) What further caution is given?

Ques. 39. (IV. 4–6.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XXXIX.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In this sermon we have a continuation of the argument presented in the last discourse. Mr. Wesley was not only free from a spirit of bigotry himself, but endeavored to form the same sentiment in others. Not content with this, he went farther still, and sought to unite all who feared God in a common effort to rescue the people from moral and spiritual degradation. To this end he was willing to pretermit any doctrine that was not essential, and to allow the largest liberty of opinion. Not only among the clergymen of the established Church, but among all professed Christians he labored to bring about union of heart and hand in this great work.

In this sermon the principles of a broad catholicity are laid down. Upon such a platform as this all Christians may harmonize. It is not a union of creeds, nor is it an abolition of doctrinal distinctions, but earnest co operation in good works, notwithstanding the existence of discordant and irreconcilable doctrinal tenets. We have seen in some measure the desires of Mr. Wesley's heart accomplished in our own time. Union of effort for the salvation of the world does not require organic union or the destruction of denominational distinctions.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XXXIX.

Love is due to all mankind. A peculiar love to those that love God. Two hinderances prevent the practice of this love—they cannot think alike, and they cannot walk

alike. This may prevent external union, but should not prevent that of the heart.

I. Consider the question here propounded — "Is thine heart right?"

1. This is not a question concerning opinions, though these were peculiar. Ignorance and prejudices we all have, and with some they may be invincible. Hence we should allow liberty of opinion.

2. Nor concerning modes of worship. Variety of opinion will necessitate variety of practice. Every man must be fully persuaded in his own conscience in regard to the congregation and mode in which he ought to worship God.

3. But the question does ask for a right faith in God and Christ, and a right love to God and to our neighbor, shown in the work of life.

II. The proposal: "Give me thine hand."

1. Not accept my opinions.

2. Nor embrace my modes of worship.

3 But love me, not only as a fellow-man, but as a fellow-Christian. Pray for me. Provoke me to love and good works. Love me not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

III. Inferences.

1. The catholic spirit is not speculative latitudinarianism. Unsettledness of thought is a curse, not a blessing. A truly catholic man is as fixed as the sun in his judgment of the fundamental truths.

2. It is not practical latitudinarianism.

3. Nor is it indifference to all Churches.

4. But it gives cordial, hearty fellowship to all whose hearts are right with God, while valuing and praising God for all its own advantages.

SERMON XXXIX

CATHOLIC SPIRIT.

"*And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand.*" —2 KINGS x. 15.

1. IT is allowed even by those who do not pay this great debt, that love is due to all mankind; the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," carrying its own evidence to all that hear it: and that, not according to the miserable construction put upon it by the zealots of old times, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," thy relation, acquaintance, friend, "and hate thine enemy:" not so; "I say unto you," saith our Lord, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children," may appear so to all mankind, "of your Father which is in heaven; who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

2. But it is sure, there is a peculiar love which we owe to those that love God. So David: "All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue." And so a greater than he: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John xiii. 34, 35.) This is that love on which the apostle John so frequently and strongly insists: "This," saith he,

"is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." (1 John iii. 11.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought," if love should call us thereto, "to lay down our lives for the brethren." (Verse 16.) And again: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." (iv. 7, 8.) "Not that we love God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (Verses 10, 11.)

3. All men approve of this; but do all men practise it? Daily experience shows the contrary. Where are even the Christians who "love one another as He hath given us commandment?" How many hinderances lie in the way! The two grand general hinderances are, first, that they cannot all think alike; and, in consequence of this, secondly, they cannot all walk alike; but in several smaller points their practice must differ in proportion to the difference of their sentiments.

4. But although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works.

5. Surely in this respect the example of Jehu himself, as mixed a character as he was of, is well worthy both the attention and imitation of every serious Christian. "And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him. And he saluted him and said to him, Is thine heart right as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand."

The text naturally divides itself into two parts:—

First, a question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab:—"Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" Secondly, an offer made on Jehonadab's answering, "It is:"—"If it be, give me thine hand."

I. 1. And, first let us consider the question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab,—"Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

The very first thing we may observe in these words, is, that here is no inquiry concerning Jehonadab's opinions. And yet it is certain, he held some which were very uncommon, indeed quite peculiar to himself; and some which had a close influence upon his practice; on which, likewise, he laid so great a stress, as to entail them upon his children's children to their latest posterity. This is evident from the account given by Jeremiah, many years after his death: "I took Jaazaniah and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites,—and set before them pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab," or Jehonadab, "the son of Rechab, our father," (it would be less ambiguous, if the words were placed thus: "Jehonadab *our father, the son of* Rechab;" out of love and reverence to whom, he probably desired his descendants might be called by his name,) "commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents.—And we have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us." (Jer. xxxv. 3–10.)

2. And yet Jehu (although it seems to have been his manner, both in things secular and religious, to *drive furiously*) does not concern himself at all with any of these things, but lets Jehonadab abound in his own sense. And neither of them appears to have given the other the least disturbance touching the opinions which he maintained.

3. It is very possible that many good men now also

may entertain peculiar opinions; and some of them may be as singular herein as even Jehonadab was. And it is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be "till the restitution of all things."

4. Nay, further: although every man necessarily believes that every particular opinion which he holds is true; (for to believe any opinion is not true, is the same thing as not to hold it;) yet can no man be assured that all his own opinions, taken together, are true. Nay, every thinking man is assured they are not; seeing *humanum est errare et nescire:* "to be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity." This, therefore, he is sensible, is his own case. He knows, in the general, that he himself is mistaken; although in what particular he mistakes, he does not, perhaps he cannot, know.

5. I say, "perhaps he cannot know;" for who can tell how far invincible ignorance may extend? or (that comes to the same thing) invincible prejudice?—which is often so fixed in tender minds, that it is afterwards impossible to tear up what has taken so deep a root And who can say, unless he knew every circumstance attending it, how far any mistake is culpable? seeing all guilt must suppose some concurrence of the will; of which He only can judge who searcheth the heart.

6. Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

7 We may, secondly, observe, that here is no inquiry

made concerning Jehonadab's mode of worship; although it is highly probable there was, in this respect also, a very wide difference between them. For we may well believe Jehonadab, as well as all his posterity, worshipped God at Jerusalem: whereas Jehu did not; he had more regard to state policy than religion. And, therefore, although he slew the worshippers of Baal, and destroyed Baal out of Israel; yet from the convenient sin of Jeroboam, the worship of the golden calves, he departed not. (2 Kings x. 29.)

8. But even among men of an upright heart, men who desire to "have a conscience void of offence," it must needs be, that, as long as there are various opinions, there will be various ways of worshipping God; seeing a variety of opinion necessarily implies a variety of practice. And as, in all ages, men have differed in nothing more than in their opinions concerning the Supreme Being, so in nothing have they more differed from each other, than in the manner of worshipping him. Had this been only in the heathen world, it would not have been at all surprising: for we know, these "by" their "wisdom knew not God;" nor, therefore, could they know how to worship him. But is it not strange, that even in the Christian world, although they all agree in the general, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" yet the particular modes of worshipping God are almost as various as among the heathens?

9. And how shall we choose among so much variety? No man can choose for, or prescribe to, another. But every one must follow the dictates of his own conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own mind; and then act according to the best light he has. Nor has any creature power to constrain another to walk by his own rule. God has given no right to any of the children of men thus to lord it over the conscience of his brethren; but every man must judge for himself, as every man must give an account of himself to God.

10. Although, therefore, every follower of Christ is obliged, by the very nature of the Christian institution, to be a member of some particular congregation or other, some church, as it is usually termed; (which implies a particular manner of worshipping God; for "two cannot walk together unless they be agreed;") yet none can be obliged by any power on earth but that of his own conscience, to prefer this or that congregation to another, this or that particular manner of worship. I know it is commonly supposed, that the place of our birth fixes the church to which we ought to belong, that one, for instance, who is born in England, ought to be a member of that which is styled the Church of England; and consequently, to worship God in the particular manner which is prescribed by that church. I was once a zealous maintainer of this; but I find many reasons to abate of this zeal. I fear it is attended with such difficulties as no reasonable man can get over. Not the least of which is, that if this rule had took place, there could have been no reformation from Popery; seeing it entirely destroys the right of private judgment, on which that whole Reformation stands.

11. I dare not, therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical: but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church? of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government, and allow the same church officers, with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? I inquire not, Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do? nor whether, in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized · in the manner of administering it; or the age of those to whom it should be administered. Nay, I ask not of you, (as clear as I am in my own mind,) whether you allow baptism and the Lord's supper at all. Let all these things stand by; we will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient

season; my only question at present is this, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"

12. But what is properly implied in the question? I do not mean, what did Jehu imply therein? But, what should a follower of Christ understand thereby, when he proposes it to any of his brethren?

The first thing implied is this: Is thy heart right with God? Dost thou believe his being, and his perfections? his eternity, immensity, wisdom, power? his justice, mercy, and truth? Dost thou believe that he now "upholdeth all things by the word of his power?" and that he governs even the most minute, even the most noxious, to his own glory, and the good of them that love him? Hast thou a divine evidence, a supernatural conviction, of the things of God? Dost thou "walk by faith, not by sight?" looking not at temporal things, but things eternal?

13. Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, "God over all, blessed for ever?" Is he revealed in thy soul? Dost thou know Jesus Christ, and him crucified? Does he dwell in thee, and thou in him? Is he formed in thy heart by faith? Having absolutely disclaimed all thy own works, thy own righteousness, hast thou "submitted thyself unto the righteousness of God," which is by faith in Christ Jesus? Art thou "found in him, not having thy own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith?" And art thou, through him, "fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life?"

14. Is thy faith ενεργουμενη δι' αγαπης,—*filled with the energy of love?* Dost thou love God (I do not say, "above all things," for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous expression, but) "with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength?" Dost thou seek all thy happiness in him alone? And dost thou find what thou seekest? Does thy soul continually "magnify the Lord, and thy spirit rejoice in God thy Saviour?" Having learned "in every thing to give thanks," dost thou find "it is

a joyful and a pleasant thing to be thankful?" Is God the centre of thy soul? the sum of all thy desires? Art thou accordingly laying up thy treasure in heaven, and counting all things else dung and dross? Hath the love of God cast the love of the world out of thy soul? Then thou art "crucified to the world;" thou art dead to all below; and thy "life is hid with Christ in God."

15. Art thou employed in doing, not thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee?—of Him that sent thee down to sojourn here awhile, to spend a few days in a strange land, till, having finished the work he hath given thee to do, thou return to thy Father's house? Is it thy meat and drink "to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven?" Is thine eye single in all things? always fixed on him? always looking unto Jesus? Dost thou point at him in whatsoever thou doest? in all thy labour, thy business, thy conversation? aiming only at the glory of God in all;—"whatsoever thou doest, either in word or deed, doing it all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through him?"

16. Does the love of God constrain thee to serve him with fear?—to "rejoice unto him with reverence?" Art thou more afraid of displeasing God, than either of death or hell? Is nothing so terrible to thee as the thought of offending the eyes of his glory? Upon this ground, dost thou "hate all evil ways," every transgression of his holy and perfect law; and herein "exercise thyself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man?"

17. Is thy heart right toward thy neighbour? Dost thou love, as thyself, all mankind without exception? "If you love those only that love you, what thank have ye?" Do you "love your enemies?" Is your soul full of good-will, of tender affection toward them? Do you love even the enemies of God, the unthankful and unholy? Do your bowels yearn over them? Could you "wish yourself" temporally "accursed" for their sake? And do you show this by "blessing them that curse

you, and praying for those that despitefully use you and persecute you?"

18. Do you show your love by your works? While you have time, as you have opportunity, do you in fact "do good to all men," neighbours or strangers, friends or enemies, good or bad? Do you do them all the good you can; endeavouring to supply all their wants; assisting them both in body and soul, to the uttermost of your power?—If thou art thus minded, may every Christian say, yea, if thou art but sincerely desirous of it, and following on till thou attain, then "thy heart is right, as my heart is with thy heart."

II. 1. "If it be, give me thy hand." I do not mean, "Be of my opinion." You need not: I do not expect or desire it. Neither do I mean, "I will be of your opinion." I cannot: it does not depend on my choice: I can no more think, than I can see or hear, as I will. Keep you your opinion; I mine; and that as steadily as ever. You need not even endeavour to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute those points, or to hear or speak one word concerning them. Let all opinions alone on one side and the other: only "give me thine hand."

2. I do not mean, "Embrace my modes of worship;" or, "I will embrace yours." This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. I believe the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. If you think the Presbyterian or Independent is better, think so still, and act accordingly. I believe infants ought to be baptized, and that this may be done either by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. It appears to me, that forms of prayer are of excellent use, particularly in the great congregation. If you judge extemporary prayer to be of more use, act suitable to your own judgment. My sen

timent is, that I ought not to forbid water, wherein persons may be baptized; and that I ought to eat bread and drink wine, as a memorial of my dying Master: however, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the light you have. I have no desire to dispute with you one moment upon any of the preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight. "If thine heart is as my heart," if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more: "give me thine hand."

3. I mean, first, love me: and that not only as thou lovest all mankind; not only as thou lovest thine enemies, or the enemies of God, those that hate thee, that "despitefully use thee and persecute thee;" not only as a stranger, as one of whom thou knowest neither good nor evil;—I am not satisfied with this;—no; "if thine heart be right, as mine with thy heart," then love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother; as a brother in Christ, a fellow-citizen of the New Jerusalem, a fellow-soldier engaged in the same warfare, under the same Captain of our salvation. Love me as a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, and a joint-heir of his glory.

4. Love me (but in a higher degree than thou dost the bulk of mankind) with the love that is *longsuffering and kind;* that is patient,—if I am ignorant or out of the way, bearing and not increasing my burden; and is tender, soft, and compassionate still;—that *envieth not,* if at any time it please God to prosper me in his work even more than thee. Love me with the love that *is not provoked,* either at my follies or infirmities; or even at my acting (if it should sometimes so appear to thee) not according to the will of God. Love me so as to *think no evil* of me; to put away all jealousy and evil-surmising. Love me with the love that *covereth all things;* that never reveals either my faults or infirmities;—that *believeth all things;* is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest construction on all my words and actions;—that *hopeth all things;* either that

the thing related was never done; or not done with such circumstances as are related; or, at least, that it was done with a good intention, or in a sudden stress of temptation. And hope to the end, that whatever is amiss will, by the grace of God, be corrected; and whatever is wanting, supplied, through the riches of his mercy in Christ Jesus.

5. I mean, secondly, commend me to God in all thy prayers; wrestle with him in my behalf, that he would speedily correct what he sees amiss, and supply what is wanting in me. In thy nearest access to the throne of grace, beg of Him who is then very present with thee, that my heart may be more as thy heart, more right both toward God and toward man; that I may have a fuller conviction of things not seen, and a stronger view of the love of God in Christ Jesus; may more steadily walk by faith, not by sight; and more earnestly grasp eternal life. Pray that the love of God and of all mankind may be more largely poured into my heart; that I may be more fervent and active in doing the will of my Father which is in heaven; more zealous of good works, and more careful to abstain from all appearance of evil.

6. I mean, thirdly, provoke me to love and to good works. Second thy prayer, as thou hast opportunity, by speaking to me, in love, whatsoever thou believest to be for my soul's health. Quicken me in the work which God has given me to do, and instruct me how to do it more perfectly. Yea, "smite me friendly, and reprove me," whereinsoever I appear to thee to be doing rather my own will, than the will of Him that sent me. Oh, speak and spare not, whatever thou believest may conduce, either to the amending my faults, the strengthening my weakness, the building me up in love, or the making me more fit, in any kind, for the Master's use.

7. I mean, lastly, love me not in word only, but in deed and in truth. So far as in conscience thou canst, (retaining still thy own opinions, and thy own manner of worshipping God,) join with me in the work of God;

and let us go on hand in hand. And thus far, it is certain, thou mayest go. Speak honourably, wherever thou art, of the work of God, by whomsoever he works, and kindly of his messengers. And, if it be in thy power, not only sympathize with them when they are in any difficulty or distress, but give them a cheerful and effectual assistance, that they may glorify God on thy behalf.

8. Two things should be observed with regard to what has been spoken under this last head: the one, that whatsoever love, whatsoever offices of love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal assistance, I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his, the same I am ready, by the grace of God, according to my measure, to give him; the other, that I have not made this claim in behalf of myself only, but of all whose heart is right toward God and man, that we may all love one another as Christ hath loved us.

III. 1. One inference we may make from what has been said. We may learn from hence, what is a catholic spirit.

There is scarce any expression which has been more grossly misunderstood, and more dangerously misapplied than this: but it will be easy for any who calmly consider the preceding observations, to correct any such misapprehensions of it, and to prevent any such misapplication.

For, from hence we may learn, first, that a catholic spirit is not *speculative* latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: this is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being "driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine," is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend, to true catholicism. A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek. He is fixed as the sun in his judgment concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine. It is true, he is always ready to hear and weigh whatsoever can be offered against his

principles; but as this does not show any wavering in his own mind, so neither does it occasion any. He does not halt between two opinions, nor vainly endeavour to blend them into one. Observe this, you who know not what spirit ye are of; who call yourselves men of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding; because your mind is all in a mist; because you have no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together. Be convinced, that you have quite missed your way; you know not where you are. You think you are got into the very spirit of Christ; when, in truth, you are nearer the spirit of Antichrist. Go, first, and learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ, and then shall you learn to be of a truly catholic spirit.

2. From what has been said, we may learn, secondly, that a catholic spirit is not any kind of *practical* latitudinarianism. It is not indifference as to public worship, or as to the outward manner of performing it. This, likewise, would not be a blessing, but a curse. Far from being an help thereto, it would, so long as it remained, be an unspeakable hinderance to the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth. But the man of a truly catholic spirit, having weighed all things in the balance of the sanctuary, has no doubt, no scruple at all, concerning that particular mode of worship wherein he joins. He is clearly convinced, that *this* manner of worshipping God is both scriptural and rational. He knows none in the world which is more scriptural, none which is more rational. Therefore, without rambling hither and thither, he cleaves close thereto, and praises God for the opportunity of so doing.

3. Hence, we may, thirdly, learn, that a catholic spirit is not indifference to all congregations. This is another sort of latitudinarianism, no less absurd and unscriptural than the former. But it is far from a man of a truly catholic spirit. He is fixed in his congregation as well as his principles. He is united to one, not only in spirit, but by all the outward ties of Chris-

tian fellowship There he partakes of all the ordinances of God. There he receives the supper of the Lord. There he pours out his soul in public prayer, and joins in public praise and thanksgiving. There he rejoices to hear the word of reconciliation, the gospel of the grace of God. With these, his nearest, his best-beloved brethren, on solemn occasions, he seeks God by fasting. These particularly he watches over in love, as they do over his soul; admonishing, exhorting, comforting, reproving, and every way building up each other in the faith. These he regards as his own household; and therefore, according to the ability God has given him, naturally cares for them, and provides that they may have all things that are needful for life and godliness.

4. But while he is steadily fixed in his religious principles, in what he believes to be the truth as it is in Jesus; while he firmly adheres to that worship of God, which he judges to be most acceptable in his sight; and while he is united by the tenderest and closest ties to one particular congregation,—his heart is enlarged toward all mankind, those he knows and those he does not; he embraces with strong and cordial affection neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. This is catholic or universal love. And he that has this is of a catholic spirit. For love alone gives the title to this character: catholic love is a catholic spirit.

5. If, then, we take this word in the strictest sense, a man of a catholic spirit is one who, in the manner above mentioned, gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart: one who knows how to value and praise God for all the advantages he enjoys, with regard to the knowledge of the things of God, the true scriptural manner of worshipping him, and, above all, his union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness: one who, retaining these blessings with the strictest care, keeping them as the apple of his eye, at the same time loves—as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint-partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and

fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom—all, of whatever opinion, or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is the man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and longing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labours, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power in all things, spiritual and temporal. He is ready "to spend and be spent for them;" yea, to lay down his life for their sake.

6. Thou, O man of God, think on these things! If thou art already in this way, go on. If thou hast heretofore mistook the path, bless God who hath brought thee back! And now run the race which is set before thee, in the royal way of universal love. Take heed, lest thou be either wavering in thy judgment, or straitened in thy bowels: but keep an even pace, rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints, and grounded in love, in true catholic love, till thou art swallowed up in love for ever and ever!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXXIX.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is allowed by all?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What do we owe to those who love God?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Do all men approve of and practice this?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) Should differences in doctrine prevent union of affection?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is said of Jehu? What is here proposed?

Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What do we first consider?

Ques. 7. (I. 2.) What is further said of Jehu?

Ques. 8. (I. 3.) What is said of many good men?

Ques 9. (I. 4.) What is the necessary condition of humanity?

Ques. 10. (I. 5.) What is said of invincible ignorance?

Ques. 11. (I. 6.) What will every wise man do?

Ques. 12. (I. 7.) What is observed secondly?

Ques. 13. (I. 8.) What will always exist, besides various opinions?

Ques. 14. (I. 9.) Can one choose for another?

Ques. 15. (I. 10.) What is every follower of Christ obliged to be?

Ques. 16. (I. 11.) What is said of imposing modes of worship?

Ques. 17. (I. 12.) What is implied in Jehu's question?

Ques. 18. (I. 13.) What questions are here asked? Are they vital?

Ques. 19. (I. 14.) What is said of our faith?

Ques. 20. (I. 15.) What of our employment?

Ques. 21. (I. 16.) What is said of the love of God?

Ques. 22. (I. 17.) What is said of our relation to our neighbor?

Ques. 23. (I. 18.) What is said of our love shown by works?

Ques. 24. (II. 1.) What follows the affirmative of these questions?

Ques. 25. (II. 2.) What is not meant here?

Ques. 26. (II. 3.) What does he mean first?

Ques. 27. (II. 4.) With what kind of love?

Ques. 28. (II. 5.) What is here meant secondly?

Ques. 29. (II. 6.) What is meant thirdly?

Ques. 30. (II. 7.) What is meant lastly?

Ques. 31. (III. 1.) What inference is here made?

Ques. 32. (III. 2.) What may be learned secondly?

Ques. 33. (III. 3.) What may we learn thirdly?

Ques. 34. (III. 4.) What is said of steadiness in principle? And of love to all mankind?

Ques. 35. (III. 5.) What then is a man of a catholic spirit?

Ques. 36. (III. 6.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XL.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

This sermon was written and published in the early ministry of Wesley, about 1741. It presents to us principally the negative side of the doctrine. Hence for a full view of it we must refer to parallel passages of his works. We shall confine ourselves here to the definition of this state of grace. The way to its attainment will be considered in connection with Sermon XLIII. The following, written in 1742, was used by Mr. Wesley repeatedly as a short statement of the doctrine:

"Whom then do you mean by one that is perfect? We mean one in whom is the mind which was in Christ, and who so walketh as Christ also walked; a man that hath clean hands and a pure heart, or that is cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; one in whom is no occasion of stumbling, and who accordingly does not commit sin. To declare this a little more particularly, we understand by that scriptural expression, "a perfect man," one in whom God hath fulfilled his faithful word, 'From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." We understand one whom God hath sanctified throughout in body, soul, and spirit; one who walketh in the light as he is in the light, in whom is no darkness at all, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son having cleansed him from all sin.

"This man can now testify to all mankind, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He is holy as God who called him is holy,

both in heart and in all manner of conversation. He loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength. He loveth his neighbor, every man as himself—yea, as Christ loveth us—them in particular that despitefully use him and persecute him, because they know not the Son, neither the Father. Indeed, his soul is all love, filled with bowels of mercies, kindness, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering. And his life agreeth thereto, full of the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. And whatever he doeth in word or deed he doeth all in the name in the love and power of the Lord Jesus. In a word, he doeth the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven.

"This it is to be a perfect man, to be sanctified throughout, even to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God, to use Archbishop Ussher's words, as continually to offer up every thought, word, work as a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Christ. In every thought of our hearts, in every word of our tongues, in every work of our hands to show forth his praise who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light." (See "Letter to the Bishop of London," "Character of a Methodist," and "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," in all of which this passage is used.)

The second great period of special prominence of this doctrine in the Methodist societies began about 1769. In a treatise published that year we find the following:

"Q. What is Christian perfection?

"A. The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love.

"Q. When may a person judge himself to have attained this?

"A. When, after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction than that which he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total

death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to rejoice evermore,' to 'pray without ceasing,' and 'in every thing to give thanks.' Not that 'to feel all love and no sin' is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time before their souls were fully renewed. None, therefore, ought to believe that the work is done till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification as clearly as his justification.

"We know it by *the witness* and by *the fruit* of the Spirit, and first by *the witness*. As when we were justified the *Spirit bore witness with our* spirit that our sins were forgiven, so when we were sanctified he bore witness that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first (as neither is that of justification); neither is it afterward always the same, but like that of justification sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yes, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet in general the latter testimony of the spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.

"Q. But still, if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a mediator? At least, is it not plain that they stand no longer in need of Christ in his priestly office?

"A. Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these; none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with, himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me; without,' or separate from, 'me, ye can do nothing.'

"In every state we need Christ in the following respects: 1. Whatever grace we receive, it is a free gift from him. 2. We receive it as his purchase, merely in consideration of the price he paid. 3. We have this grace not only *from* Christ, but *in* him. For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch, which united to the vine bears fruit, but severed from it *dries up and is with-*

ered. 4. All our blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, depend on his intercession for us, which is one branch of his priestly office, whereof, therefore, we have always equal need. 5. The best of men still need Christ in his priestly office to atone for their omissions, their shortcomings (as some not improperly speak), their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. For these are all deviations from the perfect law, and consequently need an atonement. Yet that they are not properly sins we apprehend may appear from the words of St. Paul: 'He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, for love is the fulfilling of the law.' (Rom. xiii. 8–10.) Now mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corruptible state of the body, are in no way contrary to love, nor, therefore, in the Scripture sense *sin.*

"Q. 29. Can those who are perfect in love grow in grace?

"A. Undoubtedly they can; and that not only while they are in the body, but probably to all eternity.

"Q. 30. Can they fall from it?

"A. I am well assured they can. Matters of fact put this beyond dispute. Formerly we thought one saved from sin could not fall. Now we know the contrary. Neither does any one stand by virtue of any thing that is implied in the *nature* of the state. There is no such *height* or *strength* of holiness as it is impossible to fall from. If there be any that *cannot fall*, this wholly depends upon the promise and faithfulness of God."

Finally, toward the close of the great work which took place at that time, he says: "In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in the following short propositions:

"1. There is such a thing as Christian perfection, for it is again and again mentioned in the Scripture.

"2. It is not so early as justification, for justified persons are to 'go on to perfection.' (Heb. vi. 1.)

"3. It is not so late as death, for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Phil. iii. 15.)

"4. It is not *absolute*. Absolute perfection belongs not to man nor to angels, but to God alone.

"5. It does not make a man infallible. None is infallible while he remains in the body.

"6. It is *perfect love*. (1 John iv. 18.) This is the *essence* of it: Its *properties* or inseparable fruits are *rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks*. (1 Thess. v. 16, etc.)

".7 It is *improvable*. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.

"8. It is *amissable*, capable of being lost, of which we have had instances. But we were not thoroughly convinced of this for several years.

"9. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a *gradual* work.

"10. But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this let us go on step by step.

"An *instantaneous change* has been wrought in some believers. None can deny this who are acquainted with experimental religion.

"Since that change they enjoy *perfect love*. They feel this and this alone; they rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks, Now this is all that I mean by Christian perfection; therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.

"But in some this change was not instantaneous; they did not perceive the instant when it was wrought. It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies, yet there is an instant in which life ceases; and if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it."

With these extracts before us we are prepared to take a summary view of Mr. Wesley's doctrine, especially in its relation to his Christian ethics.

The *will* is clearly the central point of the moral life. Sin

is truly sin only as it enters into or is related to *will*. The will stands in a twofold relation—one purely spiritual to God above it; the other physical and outward to the world. The spiritual or religious side of our nature is summarized in three words—*conscience, faith, love*. The perfect harmony of these with each other, their intimate relation to each other in the process of the spiritual life, and their unity in principle to the absolute moral law, have all been made clearly apparent in the preceding teachings of Wesley. But in the natural state the will finds motive of action in the lower and outward side of our nature, as well as in this inward and Godward. To these lower motives it tends, in opposition to conscience and faith and love. This is the bondage of the natural or, as Paul says, the psychical man. The new life restores the unity of the will of God through faith, love, and conscience. It gives us a moral life developed from the Christian's conscious experience as a basis. Christian perfection is the perfection of the unity of the will with our religious nature. It is thus a "conscience void of offense," a "full assurance of faith," and a "perfect love." The perfect faith springs from a perfect enlightening of conscience by the word and Spirit of God; and perfect faith begets perfect love, while perfect love gives full power to the new will. And this perfect will toward the right governs all the outward life, every thought, word, and work, and is attested by a perfect peace of conscience. This dominion of the renewed will over the outward and lower life begins with the new birth. He that is born God of doth not commit sin. But the renewed will is not yet sufficiently strong to *subdue perfectly every thought and every temper*. Conscience must be enlightened by a perfect conviction of sin, faith must apprehend the promise of full salvation, and thence must spring a *perfect love*, before the new will in which they combine the power of their moral life becomes sufficiently powerful to exert its supreme, controlling influence *over all the lower nature* as well as the outward life. In all this it will be seen that the law of the Christian life is not an ac-

commodated or lower moral standard, but the full glory of divine holiness. It is perfection. But the relation of this to our human imperfection is very clearly defined. There is room for imperfection, but it must not reach to *will*. The will must be perfect, as God and his law, to which it is linked by perfect faith, love, and conscience, are perfect. Mr. Wesley leaves no room for sin in any thing which it is "*in our power to help*." The will must be perfectly superior to the lower motives, must sit supreme above them in the light of a pure conscience, and on its throne of perfect love. But immediately when we pass from this center of our moral being (this region of intuition and will) into the outer spheres of our selfhood, the perceptions, the judgments, the imagination, the memory, the appetites, and lower affections, we find the limitations of imperfection. But it is a natural and not a moral imperfection, inasmuch as it lies beyond the conscious reach of will. But while in these outer spheres of our selfhood much imperfection remains, it would be very wrong to suppose that they are not at all reached or touched by the great change which has taken place at the center of our moral being. The influence of that change reaches to the very circumference; but the nearer the center—*i. e.*, the *will*—the more evident is its power. Only when the body is redeemed and the *psychical* shall become the *spiritual*, shall we be able to say that we have fully attained, are fully perfect.

But while Mr. Wesley's doctrine of perfection is thus ethical in its character, a perfection in the moral quality of the will, it also embraces all that is true in the teachings of emotional mysticism. Christian perfection is perfect love, love to God and love to man ruling the life and expelling both sin and fear. But herein Mr. Wesley's doctrine differs from the contemporary mysticism of France and Germany, and resembles that of the Apostle John: that love is never made to supersede knowledge, or override conscience, or dispense with law. It always maintains its proper position as the motive to holy living, which still pays reverence to all the convictions of conscience, and humbly submits to the

guidance of God's Word and confesses the limitation of its own knowledge. Such a doctrine of perfect love is perfectly safe from the corruptions which have so often disgraced that name, and at the same time it gives depth and inwardness to the moral perfection of the will, and saves it from the perfection of mere outward works of Pelagianism.

A third characteristic of Mr. Wesley's view of Christian perfection is its thoroughly evangelical character. It is a perfection which cannot abide for one moment separate from Christ. And herein it embraces all that is true in the perfectionism of the Calvinistic school. But it is not a merely imputed perfection, but the perfection of the living abiding in the living vine. To sum up all, it is a perfect faith in a perfect Saviour, drawing from him the spirit of perfect love, which flows forth in the activity of a perfect Christian life. His doctrine thus combines the good and avoids the errors of all systems of perfectionism that have ever been taught in the Christian Church.—*Burwash.*

The importance of the doctrine of Christian perfection cannot be overestimated. It is necessary, however, to study the subject carefully, for there are many dangers in the path of the inquirer. We cannot expect logical clearness and exactness from unlettered people, but ministers of the gospel are *teachers*, sent of God to direct the sinner in the way of life. One tendency to evil in the search after the higher life is toward an undue and abnormal conscientiousness, which violates Mr. Wesley's rule that errors of judgment and involuntary thoughts are not properly *sins*. Christian perfection is simply the reign of Christ in the soul, the substitution of the will of God for our will in all the affairs of life. To look for a state of being in which no fault, no error, no deficiencies will be found, is to require men to be infallible, and to substitute the environment of heaven while we are still on earth. We may have a present heaven, indeed, but it is in the perfection of love, not in the absolute, perfect conformity to the requirements of an immaculate life

The minister who continually urges his people onward in the path of Christian progress will illustrate in his preaching the words of St. Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 13, 14).

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XL.

The word perfection, though a cause of offense, is scriptural, and hence should not be discarded, but explained. We therefore inquire—

I. In what sense Christians are not perfect.

1. Not in knowledge, though needful practical knowledge of the way of right and the things of God is given.

2. Nor in freedom from mistakes. Not as to the essentials of salvation, but as to facts, and even Scripture.

3. Nor in freedom from infirmities, which is not a soft name for sins, but includes all defects not moral.

4. Nor in freedom from temptation. Christ was tempted.

5. Nor are they perfect in degree. Theirs is not an absolute quantitative perfection.

II. In what sense they are perfect.

The stages of the Christian as of the natural life. Christian perfection belongs to the fathers.

1. But even babes in Christ are so far perfect as not to commit sin. This is not proved from abstract reason, nor from individual experience, but from the Word of God. (Testimony of Paul, Rom. vi.; testimony of 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2; of 1 John iii.) The least which these passages imply is freedom from outward sin. Objections drawn from Old Testament example: From Prov. xxiv. 16, and Eccles. vii. 20. These expressed the ordinary Old Testament experience. But Christians have received the Holy Spirit, and are "no more servants, but sons." (1 Pet. i. 9, 10; Zech. xii. 8.) Objections from the New Testament: Peter, Paul, and Barna-

has did sin. But they were under no *necessity*. Paul's thorn was not a sin. James's "we all offend" refers to the "many masters," for he speaks of the perfect man. John's declaration of universal sin refers not to the present, but to the past life.

2. But only those who are strong in the Lord are so perfect as to be free from evil thoughts and evil tempers. (1) Evil thoughts, which are to be distinguished from thoughts concerning evil. This appears from the teaching of Christ (Mark vii. 21; Matt. xii. 33, and vii. 17, 18). Of Paul (2 Cor. x. 4). (2) Evil tempers. This implied in the promise of likeness to the Master, and in Paul's crucifixion with Christ. Hence freedom from pride and from sinful anger. This perfection presented in 1 John iv. 17, and i. 5, 7; Deut. xxx. 6; Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

SERMON XL.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

"*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.*"—PHIL. iii. 12.

1. THERE is scarce any expression in holy writ, which has given more offence than this. The word *perfect* is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever *preaches perfection*, (as the phrase is,) that is, asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen man or a publican.

2. And hence, some have advised, wholly to lay aside the use of those expressions, "because they have given so great offence." But are they not found in the oracles of God? If so, by what authority can any messenger of God lay them aside, even though all men should be offended? We have not so learned Christ; neither may we thus give place to the devil. Whatsoever God hath spoken, that will we speak, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear; knowing, that then alone can any minister of Christ be "pure from the blood of all men," when he hath "not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God."

3. We may not, therefore, lay these expressions aside, seeing they are the words of God and not of man. But we may and ought to explain the meaning of them; that those who are sincere of heart may not err to the right hand or left, from the mark of the prize of their high calling. And this is the more needful to be done,

because, in the verse already repeated, the apostle speaks of himself as not perfect: "Not," saith he, "as though I were already perfect." And yet immediately after, in the fifteenth verse, he speaks of himself, yea, and many others, as perfect: "Let us," saith he, "as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

4. In order, therefore, to remove the difficulty arising from this seeming contradiction, as well as to give light to them who are pressing forward to the mark, and that those who are lame be not turned out of the way, I shall endeavour to show,

First, In what sense Christians *are not;* and,

Secondly, In what sense they *are, perfect.*

I. 1. In the first place, I shall endeavour to show, in what sense Christians are *not perfect.* And both from experience and Scripture it appears, first, that they are not perfect in knowledge: they are not *so* perfect in this life as to be free from ignorance. They know, it may be, in common with other men, many things relating to the present world; and they know, with regard to the world to come, the general truths which God hath revealed. They know, likewise, (what the natural man receiveth not, for these things are spiritually discerned,) "what manner of love" it is, wherewith "the Father" hath loved them, "that they should be called the sons of God." They know the mighty working of his Spirit in their hearts; and the wisdom of his providence, directing all their paths, and causing all things to work together for their good. Yea, they know in every circumstance of life what the Lord requireth of them, and how to keep a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man.

2. But innumerable are the things which they know not. Touching the Almighty himself, they cannot search him out to perfection. "Lo, these are but a part of his ways; but the thunder of his power, who can understand?" They cannot understand, I will not say, how "there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and

these Three are One;" or how the eternal Son of God "took upon himself the form of a servant;"—but not any one attribute, not any one circumstance, of the Divine nature. Neither is it for them to know the times and seasons when God will work his great works upon the earth; no, not even those which he hath in part revealed by his servants and prophets since the world began. Much less do they know when God, having "accomplished the number of his elect, will hasten his kingdom;" when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

3. They know not the reasons even of many of his present dispensations with the sons of men; but are constrained to rest here,—Though "clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat." Yea, often with regard to his dealings with themselves, doth their Lord say unto them, "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." And how little do they know of what is ever before them, of even the visible works of his hands!—how "he spreadeth the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing?" how he unites all the parts of this vast machine by a secret chain, which cannot be broken? So great is the ignorance, so very little the knowledge, of even the best of men!

4. No one, then, is so perfect in this life, as to be free from ignorance. Nor, secondly, from mistake; which indeed is almost an unavoidable consequence of it; seeing those who "know but in part" are ever liable to err touching the things which they know not. It is true, the children of God do not mistake as to the things essential to salvation: they do not "put darkness for light, or light for darkness;" neither "seek death in the error of their life." For they are "taught of God;" and the way which he teaches them, the way of holiness, is so plain, that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." But in things unessential

to salvation they do err, and that frequently. The best and wisest of men are frequently mistaken even with regard to facts; believing those things not to have been which really were, or those to have been done which were not. Or, suppose they are not mistaken as to the fact itself, they may be with regard to its circumstances; believing them, or many of them, to have been quite different from what, in truth, they were. And hence cannot but arise many further mistakes. Hence they may believe either past or present actions which were or are evil, to be good; and such as were or are good, to be evil. Hence, also, they may judge not according to truth with regard to the characters of men; and that, not only by supposing good men to be better, or wicked men to be worse, than they are; but by believing them to have been or to be good men, who were or are very wicked; or perhaps those to have been or to be wicked men, who were or are holy and unreprovable.

5. Nay, with regard to the holy Scriptures themselves, as careful as they are to avoid it, the best of men are liable to mistake, and do mistake day by day; especially with respect to those parts thereof which less immediately relate to practice. Hence, even the children of God are not agreed as to the interpretation of many places in holy writ: nor is their difference of opinion any proof that they are not the children of God, on either side; but it is a proof that we are no more to expect any living man to be infallible than to be omniscient.

6. If it be objected to what has been observed under this and the preceding head, that St. John, speaking to his brethren in the faith, says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things;" (1 John ii. 20;) the answer is plain: "Ye know all things that are needful for your souls' health." That the apostle never designed to extend this farther, that he could not speak it in an absolute sense, is clear, first, from hence,—that otherwise he would describe the dis

ciple as "above his Master;" seeing Christ himself, as man, knew not all things: "Of that hour," saith he, "knoweth no man; no, not the Son, but the Father only." It is clear, secondly, from the apostle's own words that follow, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that deceive you;" as well as from his frequently repeated caution, "Let no man deceive you;" which had been altogether needless, had not those very persons who had that unction from the Holy One been liable, not to ignorance only, but to mistake also.

7. Even Christians, therefore, are not *so* perfect as to be free either from ignorance or error: we may, thirdly, add, nor from infirmities. Only let us take care to understand this word aright: only let us not give that soft title to known sins, as the manner of some is. So, one man tells us, "Every man has his infirmity, and mine is drunkenness:" another has the infirmity of uncleanness; another, that of taking God's holy name in vain; and yet another has the infirmity of calling his brother, "Thou fool," or returning "railing for railing." It is plain, that all you who thus speak, if ye repent not, shall, with your infirmities, go quick into hell! But I mean hereby, not only those which are properly termed *bodily infirmities*, but all those inward or outward imperfections which are not of a moral nature. Such are the weakness or slowness of understanding, dulness or confusedness of apprehension, incoherency of thought, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such (to mention no more of this kind) is the want of a ready or retentive memory. Such, in another kind, are those which are commonly, in some measure, consequent upon these; namely, slowness of speech, impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation; to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. These are the infirmities which are found in the best of men, in a larger or smaller proportion. And from these none can hope to be perfectly freed till the spirit returns to God that gave it.

8. Nor can we expect, till then, to be wholly free from temptation. Such perfection belongeth not to this life. It is true, there are those who, being given up to work all uncleanness with greediness, scarce perceive the temptations which they resist not; and so seem to be without temptation. There are also many whom the wise enemy of souls, seeing to be fast asleep in the dead form of godliness, will not tempt to gross sin, lest they should awake before they drop into everlasting burnings. I know there are also children of God who, being now justified freely, having found redemption in the blood of Christ, for the present feel no temptation God hath said to their enemies, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my children no harm." And for this season, it may be for weeks or months, he causeth them to ride on high places, he beareth them as on eagles' wings, above all the fiery darts of the wicked one. But this state will not last always; as we may learn from that single consideration,—that the Son of God himself, in the days of his flesh, was tempted even to the end of his life. Therefore, so let his servant expect to be; for "it is enough that he be as his Master."

9. Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may lastly, observe, that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to "grow in grace," and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour

II. 1. In what sense, then, are Christians perfect? This is what I shall endeavour, in the second place, to show. But it should be premised, that there are several

stages in Christian life, as in natural;—some of the children of God being but new-born babes; others having attained to more maturity. And accordingly St. John, in his First Epistle, (ii. 12, &c.,) applies himself severally to those he terms little children, those he styles young men, and those whom he entitles fathers. "I write unto you, little children," saith the apostle, "because your sins are forgiven you:" because thus far you have attained;—being "justified freely," you "have peace with God through Jesus Christ." "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one;" or, (as he afterwards added,) "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you." Ye have quenched the fiery darts of the wicked one, the doubts and fears wherewith he disturbed your first peace; and the witness of God, that your sins are forgiven, now abideth in your heart. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning." Ye have known both the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit of Christ, in your inmost soul. Ye are "perfect men," being grown up to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

2. It is of these chiefly I speak in the latter part of this discourse; for these only are perfect Christians. But even babes in Christ are in such a sense perfect, or born of God, (an expression taken also in divers senses,) as, first, not to commit sin. If any doubt of this privilege of the sons of God, the question is not to be decided by abstract reasonings, which may be drawn out into an endless length, and leave the point just as it was before. Neither is it to be determined by the experience of this or that particular person. Many may suppose they do not commit sin, when they do; but this proves nothing either way. To the law and to the testimony we appeal. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." By his word will we abide, and that alone. Hereby we ought to be judged.

3. Now, the word of God plainly declares, that even all who are justified, who are born again in the lowest

sense, "do not continue in sin;" that they cannot "live any longer therein!" (Rom. vi. 1, 2;) that they are "planted together in the likeness of the death" of Christ; (verse 5;) that their "old man is crucified with him," the body of sin being destroyed, so that henceforth they do not serve sin; that, being dead with Christ, they are free from sin; (verse 6, 7;) that they are "dead unto sin, and alive unto God;" (verse 11;) that "sin hath no more dominion over them," who are "not under the law, but under grace;" but that these, "being free from sin, are become the servants of righteousness." (Verses 14, 18.)

4. The very least which can be implied in these words, is, that the persons spoken of therein, namely, all real Christians, or believers in Christ, are made free from outward sin. And the same freedom, which St. Paul here expresses in such variety of phrases, St. Peter expresses in that one: (1 Peter iv. 1, 2:) "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin,—that he no longer should live to the desires of men, but to the will of God." For this *ceasing from sin*, if it be interpreted in the lowest sense, as regarding only the outward behaviour, must denote the ceasing from the outward act, from any outward transgression of the law.

5. But most express are the well-known words of St. John, in the third chapter of his First Epistle, verses 8, &c.: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." And those in the fifth: (verse 18:) "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."

6. Indeed, it is said, this means only, He sinneth not *wilfully;* or, he doth not commit sin *habitually;* or, *not as other men do;* or *not as he did before.* But by

whom is this said? by St. John? No: there is no such word in the text; nor in the whole chapter; nor in all his Epistle; nor in any part of his writings whatsoever. Why, then, the best way to answer a bold assertion is, simply to deny it. And if any man can prove it from the word of God, let him bring forth his strong reasons.

7. And a sort of reason there is, which has been frequently brought to support these strange assertions, drawn from the examples recorded in the word of God: "What!" say they, "did not Abraham himself commit sin,—prevaricating, and denying his wife? Did not Moses commit sin, when he provoked God at the waters of strife? Nay, to produce one for all, did not even David, 'the man after God's own heart,' commit sin, in the matter of Uriah the Hittite; even murder and adultery?" It is most sure he did. All this is true. But what is it you would infer from hence? It may be granted, first, that David, in the general course of his life, was one of the holiest men among the Jews; and, secondly, that the holiest men among the Jews did sometimes commit sin. But if you would hence infer, that all Christians do and must commit sin as long as they live, this consequence we utterly deny: it will never follow from those premises.

8. Those who argue thus seem never to have considered that declaration of our Lord: (Matt. xi. 11:) "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." I fear indeed, there are some who have imagined "the kingdom of heaven," here, to mean the kingdom of glory; as if the Son of God had just discovered to us, that the least glorified saint in heaven is greater than any man upon earth! To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There can, therefore, no doubt be made, but "the kingdom of heaven," here, (as in the following verse, where it is said to be taken by force,) or "the kingdom of

God," as St. Luke expresses it,—is that kingdom of God on earth whereunto all true believers in Christ, all real Christians belong. In these words, then, our Lord declares two things: First, that before his coming in the flesh, among all the children of men there had not been one greater than John the Baptist; whence it evidently follows, that neither Abraham, David, nor any Jew, was greater than John. Our Lord, secondly, declares, that he which is least in the kingdom of God (in that kingdom which he came to set up on earth, and which the violent now began to take by force) is greater than he:—not a greater prophet, as some have interpreted the word; for this is palpably false in fact; but greater in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we cannot measure the privileges of real Christians by those formerly given to the Jews. Their "ministration," (or dispensation,) we allow, "was glorious;" but ours "exceeds in glory." So that whosoever would bring down the Christian dispensation to the Jewish standard, whosoever gleans up the examples of weakness, recorded in the Law and the Prophets, and thence infers that they who have "put on Christ" are endued with no greater strength, doth greatly err, neither "knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."

9. "But are there not assertions in Scripture which prove the same thing, if it cannot be inferred from those examples? Does not the Scripture say expressly, 'Even a just man sinneth seven times a day?'" I answer, No; the Scripture says no such thing. There is no such text in all the Bible. That which seems to be intended is the sixteenth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of the Proverbs; the words of which are these: "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." But this is quite another thing. For, first, the words "a day" are not in the text. So that if a just man fall seven times in his life, it is as much as is affirmed here. Secondly, here is no mention of *falling into sin* at all: what is here mentioned is, *falling into temporal*

affliction. This plainly appears from the verse before, the words of which are these: "Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting-place." It follows, "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief." As if he had said, "God will deliver him out of his trouble; but when thou fallest, there shall be none to deliver thee."

10. "But, however, in other places," continue the objectors, "Solomon does assert plainly, 'There is no man that sinneth not;' (1 Kings viii. 46; 2 Chron. vi. 36;) yea, 'There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.' (Eccles. vii. 20.)" I answer, Without doubt, thus it was in the days of Solomon. Yea, thus it was from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Solomon, and from Solomon to Christ. There was then no man that sinned not. Even from the day that sin entered into the world, there was not a just man upon earth that did good and sinned not, until the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins. It is unquestionably true, that "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant." And that even so they (all the holy men of old, who were under the Jewish dispensation) were, during that infant state of the church, "in bondage under the elements of the world." "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons;"—that they might receive that "grace which is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.) Now therefore they "are no more servants, but sons." So that, whatsoever was the case of those under the law, we may safely affirm, with St. John, that, since the gospel was given, "he that is born of God sinneth not."

11. It is of great importance to observe, and that more carefully than is commonly done, the wide differ-

ence there is between the Jewish and the Christian dispensation; and that ground of it which the same apostle assigns in the seventh chapter of his gospel. (Verse 38, &c.) After he had there related those words of our blessed Lord, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," he immediately subjoins, "This spake he of the Spirit, ου εμελλον λαμβανειν οι πιστευοντες εις αυτον, —*which they who should believe on him were afterwards to receive.* For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Now the apostle cannot mean here, (as some have taught,) that the miracle-working power of the Holy Ghost was not yet given. For this was given: our Lord had given it to all the apostles, when he first sent them forth to preach the gospel. He then gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out; power to heal the sick; yea, to raise the dead. But the Holy Ghost was not yet given in his sanctifying graces, as he was after Jesus was glorified. It was then when "he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive," that he "received" those "gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them." And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then first it was, that they who "waited for the promise of the Father" were made more than conquerors over sin by the Holy Ghost given unto them.

12. That this great salvation from sin was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter also plainly testifies where, speaking of his brethren in the flesh, as now "receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls," he adds, (1 Peter i. 9, 10, &c.,) "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace," that is, the gracious dispensation, "that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory," the glorious salvation, "that should follow. Unto whom it

was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," namely, at the day of Pentecost, and so unto all generations, into the hearts of all true believers. On this ground, even "the grace which was brought unto them by the revelation of Jesus Christ," the apostle might well build that strong exhortation, "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind,—as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

13. Those who have duly considered these things must allow, that the privileges of Christians are in no wise to be measured by what the Old Testament records concerning those who were under the Jewish dispensation; seeing the fulness of time is now come; the Holy Ghost is now given; the great salvation of God is brought unto men, by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now set up on earth, concerning which the Spirit of God declared of old, (so far is David from being the pattern or standard of Christian perfection,) "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." (Zech xii. 8.)

14. If, therefore, you would prove that the apostle's words, "He that is born of God sinneth not," are not to be understood according to their plain, natural, obvious meaning, it is from the New Testament you are to bring your proofs, else you will fight as one that beateth the air. And the first of these which is usually brought is taken from the examples recorded in the New Testament. "The apostles themselves," it is said, "committed sin; nay, the greatest of them, Peter and Paul; St. Paul, by his sharp contention with Barnabas; and St. Peter, by his dissimulation at Antioch." Well: suppose both Peter and Paul did then commit sin; what is it you would infer from hence? that all the other apostles committed sin sometimes? There is no shadow of proof

in this. Or would you thence infer, that all the other Christians of the apostolic age committed sin? Worse and worse: this is such an inference as, one would imagine, a man in his senses could never have thought of. Or will you argue thus: "If two of the apostles did once commit sin, then all other Christians, in all ages, do and will commit sin as long as they live?" Alas, my brother! a child of common understanding would be ashamed of such reasoning as this. Least of all can you with any colour of argument infer, that any man *must* commit sin at all. No; God forbid we should thus speak! No necessity of sinning was laid upon them. The grace of God was surely sufficient for them. And it is sufficient for us at this day. With the temptation which fell on them, there was a way to escape; as there is to every soul of man in every temptation. So that whosoever is tempted to any sin, need not yield; for no man is tempted above that he is able to bear.

15. "But St. Paul besought the Lord thrice, and yet he could not escape from his temptation." Let us consider his own words, literally translated: "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel," or messenger, "of Satan, to buffet me. Touching this I besought the Lord thrice, that it," or he, "might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in" these "my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses;—for when I am weak, then am I strong."

16. As this scripture is one of the strongholds of the patrons of sin, it may be proper to weigh it thoroughly Let it be observed, then, first, it does by no means appear that this thorn, whatsoever it was, occasioned St. Paul to commit sin; much less laid him under any necessity of doing so. Therefore, from hence it can never be proved that any Christian must commit sin. Secondly, the ancient Fathers inform us, it was bodily

pain:—a violent headache, saith Tertullian; (*De Pudic.;*) to which both Chrysostom and St. Jerome agree. St. Cyprian* expresses it, a little more generally, in those terms, "Many and grievous torments of the flesh and of the body."† Thirdly, to this exactly agree the apostle's own words: "A thorn to the flesh, to smite, beat, or buffet me." "My strength is made perfect in weakness;"—which same word occurs no less than four times in these two verses only. But, fourthly, whatsoever it was, it could not be either inward or outward sin. It could no more be inward stirrings, than outward expressions, of anger, pride, or lust. This is manifest beyond all possible exception, from the words that immediately follow: "Most gladly will I glory in" these "my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." What! did he glory in pride, in anger, in lust? Was it through these *weaknesses* that the strength of Christ rested upon him? He goes on: "Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses; for when I am weak, then am I strong;" that is, when I am weak *in body*, then am I strong *in spirit*. But will any man dare to say, "When I am weak by pride or lust, then am I strong in spirit?" I call you all to record this day, who find the strength of Christ resting upon you, can you glory in anger, or pride, or lust? Can you take pleasure in these infirmities? Do these weaknesses make you strong? Would you not leap into hell, were it possible to escape them? Even by yourselves, then, judge, whether the apostle could glory and take pleasure in them. Let it be, lastly, observed, that this thorn was given to St. Paul above fourteen years before he wrote this Epistle; which itself was wrote several years before he finished his course. So that he had, after this, a long course to run, many battles to fight, many victories to gain, and great increase to receive in all the gifts of God, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore, from any spiritual weakness

* De Mortalitate.
† Carnis et corporis multa ac gravia tormenta.

(if such had been) which he at that time felt, we could by no means infer that he was never made strong; that Paul the aged, the father in Christ, still laboured under the same weaknesses; that he was in no higher state till the day of his death. From all which it appears, that this instance of St. Paul is quite foreign to the question, and does in nowise clash with the assertion of St. John, "He that is born of God sinneth not."

17. "But does not St. James directly contradict this? His words are, 'In many things we offend all:' (iii. 2.) and is not offending the same as committing sin?" In this place, I allow it is: I allow the persons here spoken of did commit sin: yea, that they all committed many sins. But who are the persons here spoken of? Why, those many masters or teachers, whom God had not sent; (probably the same vain men who taught that faith without works, which is so sharply reproved in the preceding chapter;) not the apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the word *we* (used by a figure of speech common in all other, as well as the inspired writings) the apostle could not possibly include himself or any other true believer, appears evidently, first, from the same word in the ninth verse:—"Therewith," saith he, "bless we God, and therewith curse we men. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing." True; but not out of the mouth of the apostle, nor of any one who is in Christ a new creature. Secondly, from the verse immediately preceding the text, and manifestly connected with it: "My brethren, be not many masters," (or teachers,) "knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." "For in many things *we* offend all." *We!* Who? Not the apostles, nor true believers; but they who knew they should *receive the greater condemnation*, because of those many offences. But this could not be spoke of the apostle himself, or of any who trod in his steps; seeing "there is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Nay, thirdly, the very verse itself proves, that, "We offend all," cannot be spoken

either of men, or of all Christians: for in it there immediately follows the mention of a man who *offends not*, as the *we* first mentioned did; from whom, therefore, he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced *a perfect man.*

18 So clearly does St. James explain himself, and fix the meaning of his own words. Yet, lest any one should still remain in doubt, St. John, writing many years after St. James, puts the matter entirely out of dispute by the express declarations above recited. But here a fresh difficulty may arise: How shall we reconcile St. John with himself? In one place he declares, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" and again, "We know that he which is born of God sinneth not:" and yet in another he saith, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and again, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

19. As great a difficulty as this may at first appear, it vanishes away, if we observe first, that the tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: "If we say we have no sin," in the former, being explained by, "If we say we have not sinned," in the latter verse. Secondly, that the point under present consideration is not whether we *have or have not sinned heretofore;* and neither of these verses asserts that we *do sin, or commit sin now.* Thirdly, that the ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:" as if he had said, "I have before affirmed, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' but let no man say, I need it not; I have no sin to be cleansed from. If we say that we have no sin, that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves, and make God a liar: but 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just,' not only 'to forgive our sins,' but also 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' that we may 'go and sin no more.'"

20. St. John, therefore, is well consistent with himself,

as well as with the other holy writers; as will yet more evidently appear, if we place all his assertions touching this matter in one view: he declares, first, The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Secondly, No man can say, I have not sinned, I have no sin to be cleansed from. Thirdly, But God is ready both to forgive our past sins, and to save us from them for the time to come. "Fourthly, "These things write I unto you," saith the apostle, "that you may not sin. But if any man" should "sin," or *have sinned*, (as the word might be rendered,) he need not continue in sin; seeing "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Thus far all is clear. But lest any doubt should remain in a point of so vast importance, the apostle resumes this subject in the third chapter, and largely explains his own meaning: "Little children," saith he, "let no man deceive you:" (as though I had given any encouragement to those that continue in sin:) "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." (Verses 7–10.) Here the point, which till then might possibly have admitted of some doubt in weak minds, is purposely settled by the last of the inspired writers, and decided in the clearest manner. In conformity, therefore, both to the doctrine of St. John, and to the whole tenor of the New Testament, we fix this conclusion,—*a Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin.*

21. This is the glorious privilege of every Christian; yea, though he be but *a babe in Christ.* But it is only of those who *are strong* in the Lord, "and have overcome the wicked one," or rather of those who "have known him that is from the beginning," that it can be

affirmed they are in such a sense perfect, as, secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. First, from evil or sinful thoughts. But here let it be observed, that thoughts concerning evil are not always evil thoughts; that a thought concerning sin, and a sinful thought are widely different. A man, for instance, may think of a murder which another has committed; and yet this is no evil or sinful thought. So our blessed Lord himself doubtless thought of, or understood, the thing spoken by the devil, when he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Yet had he no evil or sinful thought; nor indeed was capable of having any. And even hence it follows that neither have real Christians: for "every one that is perfect is as his Master." (Luke vi. 40.) Therefore, if he was free from evil or sinful thoughts, so are they likewise.

22. And, indeed, whence should evil thoughts proceed, in the servant who is *as his Master?* "Out of the heart of man" (if at all) "proceed evil thoughts." (Mark vii. 21.) If, therefore, his heart be no longer evil, then evil thoughts can no longer proceed out of it. If the tree were corrupt, so would be the fruit: but the tree is good; the fruit, therefore, is good also; (Matt. xii 33;) our Lord himself bearing witness, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," as "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." (Matt. vii. 17, 18.)

23. The same happy privilege of real Christians, St. Paul asserts from his own experience. "The weapons of our warfare," saith he, "are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds; casting down imaginations," (or *reasonings* rather, for so the word λογισμους signifies; all the reasonings of pride and unbelief against the declarations, promises, or gifts of God,) "and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor x 4, &c.)

24. And as Christians indeed are freed from evil thoughts, so are they, secondly, from evil tempers This is evident from the above-mentioned declaration of our Lord himself: "The disciple is not above his Master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." He had been delivering, just before, some of the sublimest doctrines of Christianity, and some of the most grievous to flesh and blood. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you;—and unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other." Now these he well knew the world would not receive; and therefore immediately adds, "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" As if he had said, "Do not confer with flesh and blood, touching these things,—with men void of spiritual discernment, the eyes of whose understanding God hath not opened,—lest they and you perish together." In the next verse he removes the two grand objections with which these wise fools meet us at every turn: "These things are too grievous to be borne;" or, "They are too high to be attained;"—saying, "The disciple is not above his Master; therefore, if I have suffered, be content to tread in my steps. And doubt ye not then, but I will fulfil my word: 'For every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master.'" But his Master was free from all sinful tempers. So, therefore, is his disciple, even every real Christian.

25. Every one of these can say, with St. Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:"—words that manifestly describe a deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin. This is expressed both negatively, *I live not:* (my evil nature, the body of sin, is destroyed:) and positively, *Christ liveth in me;* and, therefore, all that is holy, and just, and good. Indeed, both these, *Christ liveth in me,* and *I live not,* are inseparably connected; for "what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?"

26. He, therefore, who liveth in true believers hath 'purified their hearts by faith;" insomuch that every one that hath Christ in him the hope of glory, "purifieth himself even as He is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) He is purified from pride; for Christ was lowly of heart. He is pure from self-will or desire; for Christ desired only to do the will of his Father, and to finish his work. And he is pure from anger in the common sense of the word; for Christ was meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering. I say, in the common sense of the word; for all anger is not evil. We read of our Lord himself, (Mark iii. 5,) that he once "looked round with anger." But with what kind of anger? The next word shows, συλλυπουμενος, being, at the same time, "grieved for the hardness of their hearts." So then he was angry at the sin, and in the same moment grieved for the sinners; angry or displeased at the offence, but sorry for the offenders. With anger, yea, hatred, he looked upon the thing; with grief and love, upon the persons. Go, thou that art perfect, and do likewise. Be thus angry, and thou sinnest not; feeling a displacency at every offence against God, but only love and tender compassion to the offender.

27. Thus doth Jesus "save his people from their sins:" and not only from outward sins, but also from the sins of their hearts; from evil thoughts, and from evil tempers.—"True," say some, "we shall thus be saved from our sins; but not till death; not in this world." But how are we to reconcile this with the express words of St. John?—"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." The apostle here, beyond all contradiction, speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom (as though he had foreseen this very evasion, and set himself to overturn it from the foundation) he flatly affirms, that not only at or after death, but *in this world*, they are as their Master. (1 John iv. 17.)

28. Exactly agreeable to this are his words in the

first chapter of this Epistle, (verse 5, &c.,) "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light,—we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." And again: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, it is evident, the apostle here also speaks of a deliverance wrought in *this world*. For he saith not, the blood of Christ will cleanse at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment; but, it "cleanseth," at the time present, "us," living Christians, "from all sin." And it is equally evident, that if *any sin* remain, we are not cleansed from *all sin:* if *any* unrighteousness remain in the soul, it is not cleansed from *all* unrighteousness. Neither let any sinner against his own soul say, that this relates to justification only, or the cleansing us from the guilt of sin: first, because this is confounding together what the apostle clearly distinguishes, who mentions first, to *forgive us our sins*, and then *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Secondly, because this is asserting justification by works, in the strongest sense possible; it is making all inward as well as outward holiness necessarily previous to justification. For if the cleansing here spoken of is no other than the cleansing us from the guilt of sin, then we are not cleansed from guilt; that is, are not justified, unless on condition of "walking in the light, as he is in the light." It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.

29. Thus hath the Lord fulfilled the things he spake by his holy prophets, which have been since the world began—by Moses in particular, saying, (Deut. xxx. 6,) I "will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul;"—by David, crying out, "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me;"

—and most remarkably by Ezekiel, in those words, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;—and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.—Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.—Thus saith the Lord God, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, —the heathen shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places;—I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.)

30. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved," both in the law and in the prophets, and having the prophetic word confirmed unto us in the gospel, by our blessed Lord and his apostles; "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." "Let us fear, lest" so many "promises being made us of entering into his rest," which he that hath entered into, has ceased from his own works, "any of us should come short of it." "This one thing let us do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" crying unto him day and night, till we also are "delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!"

THE PROMISE OF SANCTIFICATION.

(Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.)

BY THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

God of all power, and truth, and grace,
  Which shall from age to age endure;
Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass
  Remains, and stands for ever sure:

Calmly to thee my soul looks up,
  And waits thy promises to prove;
The object of my steadfast hope,
  The seal of thine eternal love.

That I thy mercy may proclaim,
  That all mankind thy truth may see,
Hallow thy great and glorious name,
  And perfect holiness in me.

Chose from the world if now I stand,
  Adorned in righteousness divine;
If, brought unto the promised land,
  I justly call the Saviour mine;

Perform the work thou hast begun,
  My inmost soul to thee convert:
Love me, for ever love thine own,
  And sprinkle with thy blood my heart.

Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,
  To quench my thirst and wash me clean
Now, Father, let the gracious shower
  Descend, and make me pure from sin.

Purge me from every sinful blot,
  My idols all be cast aside:
Cleanse me from every evil thought,
  From all the filth of self and pride.

Give me a new, a perfect heart,
  From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free
The mind which was in Christ impart,
  And let my spirit cleave to thee.

Oh, take this heart of stone away!
(Thy rule it doth not, cannot own:)
In me no longer let it stay:
Oh, take away this heart of stone!

The hatred of my carnal mind
Out of my flesh at once remove;
Give me a tender heart, resign'd,
And pure, and fill'd with faith and love

Within me thy good Spirit place,
Spirit of health, and love, and power
Plant in me thy victorious grace,
And sin shall never enter more.

Cause me to walk in Christ my Way,
And I thy statutes shall fulfil;
In every point thy law obey,
And perfectly perform thy will.

Hast thou not said, who canst not lie,
That I thy law shall keep and do?
Lord, I believe, though men deny:
They all are false; but thou art true.

Oh, that I now, from sin released,
Thy word might to the utmost prove!
Enter into the promised rest,
The Canaan of thy perfect love!

There let me ever, ever dwell;
Be thou my God, and I will be
Thy servant: oh, set to thy seal!
Give me eternal life in thee.

From all remaining filth within
Let me in thee salvation have:
From actual and from inbred sin,
My ransom'd soul persist to save

Wash out my old original stain.
Tell me no more it cannot be,
Demons or men! The Lamb was slain,
His blood was all poured out for me!

Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart:
One drop of thy all-cleansing blood
Shall make my sinfulness depart,
And fill me with the life of God.

Father, supply my every need;
Sustain the life thyself hast given;
Call for the corn, the living bread,
The manna that comes down from heaven.

The gracious fruits of righteousness,
Thy blessings' unexhausted store,
In me abundantly increase;
Nor let me ever hunger more.

Let me no more, in deep complaint,
"My leanness, oh, my leanness!" cry,
Alone consumed with pining want,
Of all my Father's children I!

The painful thirst, the fond desire,
Thy joyous presence shall remove;
While my full soul doth still require
The whole eternity of love.

Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,
I wait to prove thy perfect will;
Be mindful of thy gracious word,
And stamp me with thy Spirit's seal.

Thy faithful mercies let me find,
In which thou causest me to trust;
Give me thy meek and lowly mind,
And lay my spirit in the dust.

Show me how foul my heart hath been,
When all renew'd by grace I am:
When thou hast emptied me of sin,
Show me the fulness of my shame.

Open my faith's interior eye,
Display thy glory from above;
And all I am shall sink and die,
Lost in astonishment and love.

Confound, o'erpower me, with thy grace:
I would be by myself abhorr'd;
(All might, all majesty, all praise,
All glory be to Christ my Lord!)

Now let me gain perfection's height!
Now let me into nothing fall!
Be less than nothing in my sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XL.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of this expression?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What have some therefore advised?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) May we do this?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What does he propose to show?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is to be shown in the first place?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What is said of our ignorance?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What is said of God's dispensations?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) Does perfection consist with ignorance?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) What is said of the liability to mistake?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) What objection is here noticed?

Ques. 11. (I. 7.) Are perfect Christians free from ignorance or error?

Ques. 12. (I. 8.) Or from temptation?

Ques. 13. (I. 9.) What, therefore, does Christian perfection imply?

Ques. 14. (II. 1.) What is the second division of the sermon?

Ques. 15. (II. 2.) What is said of babes in Christ?

Ques. 16. (II. 3.) What is said of those who are justified?

Ques. 17. (II. 4.) What is the least that is implied in these words?

Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What quotation is made from St. John?

Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What various constructions are given these words?

Ques. 20. (II. 7.) What is said of the case of Abraham and others?

Ques. 21. (II. 8.) What is said of those who argue thus?

Ques. 22. (II. 9.) What further objection is considered?

Ques. 23. (II. 10.) What do objectors say further?

Ques. 24. (II. 11.) What is it of great importance to observe?

Ques. 25. (II. 12.) When was this great salvation given?

Ques. 26. (II. 13.) How are privileges of Christians to be measured?

Ques. 27. (II. 14.) Where are the proofs to be found?

Ques. 28. (II. 15.) What objection is made from the case of St. Paul?

Ques. 29. (II. 16.) What is said of this scripture?

Ques. 30. (II. 17.) What objection is made from the words of St. James?

Ques. 31. (II. 18.) What is said here of St. James?

Ques. 32. (II. 19.) What is said of this difficulty?

Ques. 33. (II. 20.) What is said of the consistency of St. John?

Ques. 34. (II. 21.) What is said of this privilege?

Ques. 35. (II. 22.) What is said of evil thoughts?

Ques. 36. (II. 23.) What is said of St. Paul's experience?

Ques. 37. (II. 24.) What is said of evil tempers?

Ques. 38. (II. 25.) What may they say with St. Paul?

Ques. 39. (II. 26.) What is said of true believers?

Ques. 40. (II. 27, 28.) What is said of the objection here mentioned?

Ques. 41. (II. 29.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLI.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

"The present sermon," says Prof. Burwash, "forms a most important supplement to Mr. Wesley's definition of Christian perfection, and was inserted, seemingly for that purpose, in the edition of 1770. The doctrine of Christian perfection of necessity leads to constant scrutiny of the inward life; and, as that life is known to us only in conscious thought, the discernment of *the moral character of every thought* becomes necessary. So far as thoughts are under the control of the will they come under the same law of moral character as words or acts. It is only the *involuntary* or wandering thoughts that need special consideration. These are judged of by their relation to our tempers. The word temper (now almost obsolete in this sense except as a vague general term, as good-tempered, etc.) was used by Mr. Wesley to designate all those principles of our nature which contain the element of desire, and which hence *influence the will*. In perfect love the will is in perfect and continuous unity with the principle of love to God, and all desire is fully subordinate to the control of this perfect will. It is through desire that the will is reached from without, and while the will cannot prevent an approach from without, to permit that approach to stir up an antagonism to the governing principle of divine love would indicate a state of moral, as well as merely natural, imperfection. Mr. Wesley's doctrine seems to require, not the extinction, but the complete subordination and control of all desire."

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLI.

The relation of perfect control of our thoughts to perfect love. Practical importance of the questions. Mistaken views lead to doubt and to darkness.

I. What are the several sorts of vandering thoughts? Two classes—thoughts which wander away from God and thoughts that wander from the subject before the mind. By nature all our thoughts wander from God, or are at enmity against him. The secret of all these is want of love for God. But these are carefully to be distinguished from the intellectual infirmity which prevents continuous fixed thought.

II. What are the several occasions of wandering thoughts?

1. Thoughts that wander from God are occasioned by sinful tempers—either negative, the absence of love; or positive, as pride, anger, revenge, lust, covetousness.

2. The thoughts which wander from the subject in hand may be occasioned by bodily disease or infirmity, or by association of ideas, or by accidental pleasure or pain, or by diversion of the attention, or by suggestions of evil spirits.

III. What kind of wandering thoughts are sinful?

1. Thoughts which wander from God, and exclude him.

2. Thoughts which spring from evil tempers.

3. Thoughts which produce or feed sinful tempers.

4. Thoughts caused by the organization or weakness of the body become sinful as they feed sinful tempers. So likewise those suggested from without or by Satan.

5. But apart from these cases wandering thoughts of the second class are not sinful any more than delirium or dream; hence not inconsistent with perfect love.

IV. From what kind of wandering thoughts may we expect to be delivered?

1. From those which wander from God, or are sinful.

2. But from the others we can only be delivered as we are delivered from their occasions.

SERMON XLI.

WANDERING THOUGHTS.

"*Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*"—2 Cor. x. 5.

1. But will God so "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" that no wandering thought will find a place in the mind, even while we remain in the body? So some have vehemently maintained; yea, have affirmed that none are perfected in love unless they are so far perfected in understanding, that all wandering thoughts are done away; unless not only every affection and temper be holy and just and good, but every individual thought which arises in the mind be wise and regular.

2. This is a question of no small importance. For how many of those who fear God, yea, and love him, perhaps with all their heart, have been greatly distressed on this account? How many, by not understanding it right, have not only been distressed, but greatly hurt in their souls;—cast into unprofitable, yea, mischievous reasonings, such as slackened their motion towards God, and weakened them in running the race set before them! Nay, many, through misapprehensions of this very thing, have cast away the precious gift of God. They have been induced, first to doubt of, and then to deny, the work God had wrought in their souls; and hereby have grieved the Spirit of God, till he withdrew and left them in utter darkness!

3. How is it, then, that amidst the abundance of books which have been lately published almost on all subjects, we should have none upon wandering thoughts? at least none that will at all satisfy a calm and serious mind? In order to do this in some degree, I purpose to inquire,

I. What are the several sorts of wandering thoughts?
II. What are the general occasions of them?
III. Which of them are sinful, and which not?
IV. Which of them we may expect and pray to be delivered from?

I. 1. I purpose to inquire, first, What are the several sorts of wandering thoughts? The particular sorts are innumerable; but in general, they are of two sorts: thoughts that wander from God; and thoughts that wander from the particular point we have in hand.

2. With regard to the former, all our thoughts are naturally of this kind; for they are continually wandering from God: we think nothing about him: God is not in all our thoughts; we are, one and all, as the apostle observes, "without God in the world." We think of what we love; but we do not love God; therefore, we think not of him. Or, if we are now and then constrained to think of him for a time, yet, as we have no pleasure therein, nay, rather, as these thoughts are not only insipid, but distasteful and irksome to us, we drive them out as soon as we can, and return to what we love to think of. So that the world, and the things of the world,—what we shall eat, what we shall drink, what we shall put on,—what we shall see, what we shall hear, what we shall gain,—how we shall please our senses or our imagination,—takes up all our time, and engrosses all our thought. So long, therefore, as we love the world; that is, so long as we are in our natural state; all our thoughts, from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, are no other than wandering thoughts.

3. But many times we are not only "without God in the world," but also fighting against him; as there is in every man by nature a "carnal mind which is enmity against God:" no wonder, therefore, that men abound with unbelieving thoughts; either saying in their hearts, "There is no God," or questioning, if not denying, his power or wisdom, his mercy, or justice, or holiness. No wonder that they so often doubt of his providence, at least, of its extending to all events; or that, even though

they allow it, they still entertain murmuring or repining thoughts. Nearly related to these, and frequently connected with them, are proud and vain imaginations. Again: sometimes they are taken up with angry, malicious, or revengeful thoughts; at other times, with airy scenes of pleasure, whether of sense or imagination; whereby the earthy, sensual mind becomes more earthy and sensual still. Now by all these they make flat war with God: these are wandering thoughts of the highest kind.

4. Widely different from these are the other sort of wandering thoughts; in which the heart does not wander from God, but the understanding wanders from the particular point it had then in view. For instance: I sit down to consider those words in the verse preceding the text, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." I think, "This ought to be the case with all that are called Christians. But how far is it otherwise! Look round into almost every part of what is termed 'the Christian world.' What manner of weapons are these using? In what kind of warfare are they engaged,—

> 'While men, like fiends, each other tear,
> In all the hellish rage of war?'

See how *these* Christians love one another! Wherein are they preferable to Turks and pagans? What abomination can be found among Mohammedans or heathens which is not found among Christians also?" And thus my mind runs off, before I am aware, from one circumstance to another. Now, all these are, in some sense, wandering thoughts: for although they do not wander from God, much less fight against him, yet they do wander from the particular point I had in view.

II. Such is the nature, such are the sorts (to speak rather usefully, than philosophically) of wandering thoughts. But what are the general occasions of them? This we are, in the second place, to consider.

1. And it is easy to observe, that the occasions of the former sort of thoughts, which oppose or wander

from God, are, in general, sinful tempers. For instance, why is not God in all the thoughts, in any of the thoughts, of a natural man? For a plain reason: be he rich or poor, learned or unlearned, he is an atheist; (though not vulgarly so called;) he neither knows nor loves God. Why are his thoughts continually wandering after the world? Because he is an idolater. He does not indeed worship an image, or bow down to the stock of a tree; yet is he sunk into equally damnable idolatry: he loves, that is, worships the world. He seeks happiness in the things that are seen, in the pleasures that perish in the using. Why is it that his thoughts are perpetually wandering from the very end of his being, the knowledge of God in Christ? Because he is an unbeliever: because he has no faith; or, at least, no more than a devil. So all these wandering thoughts easily and naturally spring from that evil root of unbelief.

2. The case is the same in other instances: pride, anger, revenge, vanity, lust, covetousness, every one of them occasions thoughts suitable to its own nature. And so does every sinful temper of which the human mind is capable. The particulars it is hardly possible, nor is it needful to enumerate: it suffices to observe, that as many evil tempers as find a place in any soul, so many ways that soul will depart from God, by the worst kind of wandering thoughts.

3. The occasions of the latter kind of wandering thoughts are exceeding various. Multitudes of them are occasioned by the natural union between the soul and body. How immediately and how deeply is the understanding affected by a diseased body! Let but the blood move irregularly in the brain, and all regular thinking is at an end. Raging madness ensues; and then farewell to all evenness of thought. Yea, let only the spirits be hurried or agitated to a certain degree, and a temporary madness, a delirium, prevents all settled thought. And is not the same irregularity of thought, in a measure, occasioned by every nervous disorder? So does "the corruptible body press down the soul, and cause it to muse about many things."

4. But does it only cause this in the time of sickness or preternatural disorder? Nay, but more or less, at all times, even in a state of perfect health. Let a man be ever so healthy, he will be more or less delirious every four-and-twenty hours. For does he not sleep? And while he sleeps, is he not liable to dream? And who then is master of his own thoughts, or able to preserve the order and consistency of them? Who can then keep them fixed to any one point, or prevent their wandering from pole to pole?

5. But suppose we are awake, are we always so awake that we can steadily govern our thoughts? Are we not unavoidably exposed to contrary extremes, by the very nature of this machine, the body? Sometimes we are too heavy, too dull and languid, to pursue any chain of thought. Sometimes, on the other hand, we are too lively. The imagination, without leave, starts to and fro, and carries us away hither and thither, whether we will or no; and all this from the merely natural motion of the spirits, or vibration of the nerves.

6. Further: how many wanderings of thought may arise from those various associations of our ideas which are made entirely without our knowledge, and independently on our choice? How these connections are formed, we cannot tell; but they are formed in a thousand different manners. Nor is it in the power of the wisest or holiest of men to break those associations, or prevent what is the necessary consequence of them, and matter of daily observation. Let the fire but touch one end of the train, and it immediately runs on to the other.

7. Once more: let us fix our attention as studiously as we are able on any subject, yet let either pleasure or pain arise, especially if it be intense, and it will demand our immediate attention, and attach our thought to itself. It will interrupt the steadiest contemplation, and divert the mind from its favourite subject.

8. These occasions of wandering thoughts lie within, are wrought into our very nature. But they will likewise naturally and necessarily arise from the various impulse of outward objects. Whatever strikes upon the organ of

sense, the eye or ear, will raise a perception in the mind. And, accordingly, whatever we see or hear will break in upon our former train of thought. Every man, therefore, that does any thing in our sight, or speaks any thing in our hearing, occasions our mind to wander, more or less, from the point it was thinking of before.

9. And there is no question but those evil spirits who are continually seeking whom they may devour, make use of all the foregoing occasions to hurry and distract our minds. Sometimes by one, sometimes by another of these means, they will harass and perplex us, and, so far as God permits, interrupt our thoughts, particularly when they are engaged on the best subjects. Nor is this at all strange: they well understand the very springs of thought; and know on which of the bodily organs the imagination, the understanding, and every other faculty of the mind more immediately depends And hereby they know how, by affecting those organs, to affect the operations dependent on them. Add to this, that they can inject a thousand thoughts, without any of the preceding means; it being as natural for spirit to act upon spirit, as for matter to act upon matter. These things being considered, we cannot admire that our thought so often wanders from any point which we have in view.

III. 1. What kind of wandering thoughts are sinful, and what not, is the third thing to be inquired into. And, first, all those thoughts which wander from God, which leave him no room in our minds, are undoubtedly sinful. For all these imply practical atheism; and by these we are without God in the world. And so much more are all those which are contrary to God, which imply opposition or enmity to him. Such are all murmuring, discontented thoughts, which say, in effect, "We will not have thee to rule over us;"—all unbelieving thoughts, whether with regard to his being, his attributes, or his providence. I mean, his particular providence over all things, as well as all persons, in the universe; that without which "not a sparrow falls to the ground," by which "the hairs of our head are all num

bered;" for as to a general providence, (vulgarly so called,) contradistinguished from a particular, it is only a decent, well-sounding word, which means just nothing.

2. Again: all thoughts which spring from sinful tempers are undoubtedly sinful. Such, for instance, are those that spring from a revengeful temper, from pride, or lust, or vanity. "An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit;" therefore, if the tree be evil, so must the fruit be also.

3. And so must those be which either produce or feed any sinful temper; those which either give rise to pride or vanity, to anger or love of the world, or confirm and increase these or any other unholy temper, passion, or affection. For not only whatever flows from evil is evil; but also whatever leads to it; whatever tends to alienate the soul from God, and to make or keep it earthly, sensual, and devilish.

4. Hence, even those thoughts which are occasioned by weakness or disease, by the natural mechanism of the body or by the laws of vital union, however innocent they may be in themselves, do nevertheless become sinful, when they either produce or cherish and increase in us any sinful temper; suppose the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life. In like manner, the wandering thoughts which are occasioned by the words or actions of other men, if they cause or feed any wrong disposition, then commence sinful. And the same we may observe of those which are suggested or injected by the devil. When they minister to any earthly or devilish temper, (which they do, whenever we give place to them, and thereby make them our own,) then they are equally sinful with the tempers to which they minister.

5. But, abstracting from these cases, wandering thoughts, in the latter sense of the word, that is, thoughts wherein our understanding wanders from the point it has in view, are no more sinful than the motion of the blood in our veins, or of the spirits in our brain. If they arise from an infirm constitution, or from some accidental weakness or distemper, they are

as innocent as it is to have a weak constitution or a distempered body. And surely no one doubts but a bad state of nerves, a fever of any kind, and either a transient or a lasting delirium, may consist with perfect innocence And if they should arise in a soul which is united to a healthful body, either from the natural union between the body and soul, or from any of ten thousand changes which may occur in those organs of the body that minister to thought;—in any of these cases they are as perfectly innocent as the causes from which they spring. And so they are when they spring from the casual, involuntary associations of our ideas.

6. If our thoughts wander from the point we had in view, by means of other men variously affecting our senses, they are equally innocent still: for it is no more a sin to understand what I see and hear, and in many cases cannot help seeing, hearing, and understanding, than it is to have eyes and ears. "But if the devil injects wandering thoughts, are not those thoughts evil?" They are troublesome, and in that sense evil; but they are not sinful. I do not know that he spoke to our Lord with an audible voice; perhaps he spoke to his heart only, when he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But whether he spoke inwardly or outwardly, our Lord doubtless understood what he said. He had therefore a thought correspondent to those words. But was it a sinful thought? We know it was not. In him was no sin, either in action, or word, or thought. Nor is there any sin in a thousand thoughts of the same kind, which Satan may inject into any of our Lord's followers.

7. It follows, that none of these wandering thoughts (whatever unwary persons have affirmed, thereby grieving whom the Lord had not grieved,) are inconsistent with perfect love. Indeed, if they were, then not only sharp pain, but sleep itself, would be inconsistent with it:—sharp pain; for whenever this supervenes, whatever we were before thinking of, it will interrupt our thinking, and of course draw our thoughts into another

channel:—yea, and sleep itself; as it is a state of insensibility and stupidity; and such as is generally mixed with thoughts wandering over the earth, loose, wild, and incoherent. Yet certainly these are consistent with perfect love: so then are all wandering thoughts of this kind.

IV. 1. From what has been observed, it is easy to give a clear answer to the last question,—What kind of wandering thoughts we may expect and pray to be delivered from.

From the former sort of wandering thoughts,—those wherein the heart wanders from God; from all that are contrary to his will, or that leave us without God in the world,—every one that is perfected in love is unquestionably delivered. This deliverance, therefore, we may expect; this we may, we ought to pray for. Wandering thoughts of this kind imply unbelief, if not enmity against God; but both of these he will destroy, will bring utterly to an end. And indeed, from all sinful wandering thoughts we shall be absolutely delivered. All that are perfected in love are delivered from these; else they were not saved from sin. Men and devils will tempt them all manner of ways; but they cannot prevail over them.

2. With regard to the latter sort of wandering thoughts, the case is widely different. Till the cause is removed, we cannot in reason expect the effect should cease. But the causes or occasions of these will remain as long as we remain in the body. So long, therefore, we have all reason to believe the effects will remain also.

3. To be more particular: Suppose a soul, however holy, to dwell in a distempered body; suppose the brain be so thoroughly disordered, as that raging madness follows; will not all the thoughts be wild and unconnected as long as that disorder continues? Suppose a fever occasions that temporary madness which we term "a delirium;" can there be any just connection of thought till that delirium is removed? Yea, suppose what is called "a nervous disorder" to rise to so high a degree

as to occasion at least a partial madness; will there not be a thousand wandering thoughts? And must not these irregular thoughts continue as long as the disorder which occasions them?

4. Will not the case be the same with regard to those thoughts that necessarily arise from violent pain? They will more or less continue, while that pain continues by the inviolable order of nature. This order, likewise, will obtain, where the thoughts are disturbed, broken, or interrupted, by any defect of the apprehension, judgment, or imagination, flowing from the natural constitution of the body. And how many interruptions may spring from the unaccountable and involuntary association of our ideas! Now all these are directly or indirectly caused by the corruptible body pressing down the mind. Nor, therefore, can we expect them to be removed till "this corruptible shall put on incorruption."

5. And then only when we lie down in the dust, shall we be delivered from those wandering thoughts which are occasioned by what we see and hear, among those by whom we are now surrounded. To avoid these we must go out of the world: for as long as we remain therein, as long as there are men and women round about us, and we have eyes to see, and ears to hear, the things which we daily see and hear will certainly affect our mind, and will more or less break in upon and interrupt our preceding thoughts.

6. And as long as evil spirits roam to and fro in a miserable, disordered world, so long they will assault (whether they can prevail or no) every inhabitant of flesh and blood. They will trouble even those whom they cannot destroy: they will attack, if they cannot conquer. And from these attacks of our restless, unwearied enemies, we must not look for an entire deliverance, till we are lodged "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

7. To sum up the whole: To expect deliverance from those wandering thoughts which are occasioned by evil spirits, is to expect that the devil should die or fall asleep, or, at least, should no more go about as a roar

ing lion. To expect deliverance from those which are occasioned by other men, is to expect either that men should cease from the earth, or that we should be absolutely secluded from them, and have no intercourse with them; or that having eyes we should not see, neither hear with our ears, but be as senseless as stocks or stones. And to pray for deliverance from those which are occasioned by the body, is, in effect, to pray that we may leave the body; otherwise it is praying for impossibilities and absurdities; praying that God would reconcile contradictions, by continuing our union with a corruptible body without the natural, necessary consequences of that union. It is as if we should pray to be angels and men, mortal and immortal, at the same time. Nay!—but when that which is immortal is come, mortality is done away.

8. Rather let us pray, both with the spirit and with the understanding, that all these things may work together for our good; that we may suffer all the infirmities of our nature, all the interruptions of men, all the assaults and suggestions of evil spirits, and in all be "more than conquerors." Let us pray, that we may be delivered from all sin; that both root and branch may be destroyed: that we may be "cleansed from all pollution of flesh and spirit," from every evil temper, and word, and work: that we may "love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength;" that all the fruit of the Spirit may be found in us,—not only, love, joy, peace, but also "longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." Pray that all these things may flourish and abound, may increase in you more and more, till an abundant entrance be ministered unto you, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLI.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of bringing every thought into captivity?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said of the distress of many on account of wandering thoughts?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is said of books on this subject?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) How is the sermon divided?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What does he propose to inquire first?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) To what class do our thoughts naturally belong?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What is said of our attitude toward God?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) What is said of the other class of wandering thoughts?

Ques. 9. (II. 1.) What is said to be easy to observe?

Ques. 10. (II. 2.) What is said of pride, anger, revenge, etc.?

Ques. 11. (II. 3.) What is said of the occasions of the latter kind?

Ques. 12. (II. 4.) Is irregularity of thought confined to time of sickness or preternatural disorder?

Ques. 13. (II. 5.) What is said of governing our thoughts when awake?

Ques. 14. (II. 6.) What is said of another kind of wandering thoughts?

Ques. 15. (II. 7.) What effect has pleasure or pain upon the steadiness of our thoughts?

Ques. 16. (II. 8.) Where do these occasions of wandering thoughts lie?

Ques. 17. (II. 9.) What is said of the influence of evil spirits?

Ques. 18. (III. 1.) What is the third inquiry?

Ques. 19. (III. 2.) What is said of thoughts that spring from evil tempers?

Ques. 20. (III. 3.) What of those that produce or feed sinful temper?

Ques. 21. (III. 4.) When do thoughts arising from disease or the body become sinful?

Ques. 22. (III. 5.) What kind of wandering thoughts are not sinful?

Ques. 23. (III. 6.) What other kind are equally innocent?

Ques. 24. (III. 7.) What is said of those involuntary thoughts as regards perfect love?

Ques. 25. (IV. 1.) What follows from the preceding argument?

Ques. 26. (IV. 2.) What is said, further, of these involuntary thoughts?

Ques. 27. (IV. 3.) What supposition is here made?

Ques. 28. (IV. 4.) What is said of thoughts arising from violent pain?

Ques. 29. (IV. 5.) When shall we be delivered from these wandering thoughts arising from our sight and hearing?

Ques. 30. (IV. 6.) What is said of the assaults of evil spirits?

Ques. 31. (IV. 7.) How does he sum up the whole?

Ques. 32. (IV. 8.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

The forcible presentation of a perfect Christian life, as it has been detailed in the sermons immediately preceding, gave occasion to great abuses. Mr. Wesley was misrepresented by avowed enemies, and his teaching imperfectly comprehended by many whose purposes were without blame. They were not content, however, to stop at the scriptural boundaries defined by Mr. Wesley. The doctrine of perfection was carried to wild and extravagant and even sinful extremes. One of the abuses to which this conduct gave rise was discussed in the Conference of 1745:

"*Ques.* Should we not have a care of depreciating justification, in order to exalt the state of full sanctification?

"*Ans.* Undoubtedly we should beware of this, for one may insensibly slide into it.

"*Ques.* How shall we effectually avoid it?

"*Ans.* When we are going to speak of entire sanctification, let us first describe the blessings of a justified state as strongly as possible.

"*Ques.* In what manner should we preach entire sanctification?

"*Ans.* Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward. To those who are, always by way of promise, always drawing rather than driving."

These words are applicable to our own times in an eminent degree. Extreme views of any kind are seldom just. Let us contend for the fullness of the promise of God, whilst we thank him for any measure of grace received.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLII.

Satan's devices are numberless. We consider one especially. The babe in Christ is already partaker of the inward kingdom of heaven. This is a great blessing, but God has greater things in store, even perfect love, perfect light, perfect purity. Satan hinders or destroys the first work by expectation of the second.

I. The way in which this is done.

1. He damps our joy by consideration of our sinfulness.

2. He attacks our peace, urging that we are not fit to see God.

3. Or he leads us to doubt our forgiveness because we lack fruit.

4. Especially is this the case in time of bodily weakness.

5. He then attacks our righteousness. Joy and peace are an important means of maintaining both inward and outward holiness. Servile fear weakens the soul. Closely connected with this is assault of our faith, which is the root of all holiness. The view of our defects leads us to lose sight of God's love in Christ, and forget the recompense of reward. Again the expectation of holiness may become an occasion of unholy tempers, fretfulness, impatience, envy, and, perhaps, prejudice against the doctrine of holiness.

II. How may we resist these fiery darts of the enemy?

Look from your sins to the free grace of Christ, who is your Advocate, keeping before you the hope of heaven, remembering the great work already done, taking courage from the example of others, redeeming the time, and pressing forward to the attainment of the blessing.

SERMON XLII.

SATAN'S DEVICES.

"*We are not ignorant of his devices.*"—2 Cor. ii. 11.

1. The devices whereby the subtle god of this world labours to destroy the children of God—or at least to torment whom he cannot destroy, to perplex and hinder them in running the race which is set before them—are numberless as the stars of heaven, or the sand upon the sea-shore. But it is of one of them only that I now propose to speak, (although exerted in various ways,) whereby he endeavours to divide the gospel against itself, and by one part of it to overthrow the other.

2. The inward kingdom of heaven, which is set up in the hearts of all that repent and believe the gospel, is no other than "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Every babe in Christ knows we are made partakers of these, the very hour that we believe in Jesus. But these are only the first-fruits of his Spirit; the harvest is not yet. Although these blessings are inconceivably great, yet we trust to see greater than these. We trust to love the Lord our God, not only as we do now, with a weak, though sincere, affection, but "with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength." We look for power to "rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks;" knowing, "this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us."

3. We expect to be "made perfect in love;" in that which casts out all painful fear, and all desire but that of glorifying him we love, and of loving and serving him more and more. We look for such an increase in the experimental knowledge and love of God our Sa

viour, as will enable us always "to walk in the light as he is in the light." We believe the whole mind will be in us "which was also in Christ Jesus;" that we shall love every man so as to be ready to lay down our life for his sake; so as, by this love, to be freed from anger, and pride, and from every unkind affection. We expect to be "cleansed from all our idols," "from all filthiness," whether "of flesh or spirit;" to be "saved from all our uncleannesses," inward or outward; to be purified "as He is pure."

4. We trust in His promise who cannot lie, that the time will surely come, when, in every word and work, we shall do his blessed will on earth, as it is done in heaven; when all our conversation shall be seasoned with salt, all meet to minister grace to the hearers; when, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, it shall be done to the glory of God; when all our words and deeds shall be "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through him."

5. Now this is the grand device of Satan, to destroy the first work of God in the soul, or at least to hinder its increase, by our expectation of that greater work. It is therefore my present design, first, to point out the several ways whereby he endeavours this: and, secondly, to observe how we may retort these fiery darts of the wicked one; how we may rise the higher, by what he intends for an occasion of our falling.

1. I am, first, to point out the several ways whereby Satan endeavours to destroy the first work of God in the soul, or at least to hinder its increase, by our expectation of that great work. And, 1. He endeavours to damp our joy in the Lord, by the consideration of our own vileness, sinfulness, unworthiness; added to this, that there must be a far greater change than is yet, or we cannot see the Lord. If we knew we must remain as we are, even to the day of our death, we might possibly draw a kind of comfort, poor as it was, from that necessity. But as we know we need not remain in this state, as we are assured there is a greater change to

come, and that, unless sin be all done away in this life, we cannot see God in glory,—that subtle adversary often damps the joy we should otherwise feel in what we have already attained, by a perverse representation of what we have not attained, and the absolute necessity of attaining it. So that we cannot rejoice in what we have, because there is more which we have not. We cannot rightly taste the goodness of God, who hath done so great things for us, because there are so much greater things which, as yet, he hath not done. Likewise, the deeper conviction God works in us of our present unholiness, and the more vehement desire we feel in our heart of the entire holiness he hath promised, the more are we tempted to think lightly of the present gifts of God, and to undervalue what we have already received, because of what we have not received.

2. If he can prevail thus far, if he can damp our joy, he will soon attack our peace also. He will suggest, "Are you fit to see God? He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. How, then, can you flatter yourself so as to imagine he beholds you with approbation? God is holy: you are unholy. What communion hath light with darkness? How is it possible that you, unclean as you are, should be in a state of acceptance with God? You see indeed the mark, the prize of your high calling; but do you not see it is far off? How can you presume then to think that all your sins are already blotted out? How can this be, until you are brought nearer to God, until you bear more resemblance to him?" Thus will he endeavour not only to shake your peace, but even to overturn the very foundation of it; to bring you back, by insensible degrees, to the point from whence you set out first, even to seek for justification by works, or by your own righteousness,—to make something in you the ground of your acceptance, or, at least, necessarily previous to it.

3. Or, if we hold fast, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ;" and "I am justified freely by God's grace, through

the redemption which is in Jesus;" yet he will not cease to urge, "But the tree is known by its fruits. and have you the fruits of justification? Is that mind in you which was in Christ Jesus? Are you dead unto sin, and alive unto righteousness? Are you made conformable to the death of Christ, and do you know the power of his resurrection?" And then, comparing the small fruits we feel in our souls with the fulness of the promises, we shall be ready to conclude, "Surely God hath not said that my sins are forgiven me? Surely I have not received the remission of my sins; for what lot have I among them that are sanctified?"

4. More especially in the time of sickness and pain, he will press this with all his might: "Is it not the word of Him that cannot lie, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?' But you are not holy; you know it well; you know holiness is the full image of God: and how far is this above, out of your sight? You cannot attain unto it. Therefore, all your labour has been in vain. All these things you have suffered in vain. You have spent your strength for nought. You are yet in your sins, and must therefore perish at the last." And thus, if your eye be not steadily fixed on Him who hath borne all your sins, he will bring you again under that "fear of death," whereby you was so long "subject unto bondage," and by this means impair, if not wholly destroy your peace, as well as joy in the Lord.

5. But his masterpiece of subtilty is still behind Not content to strike at your peace and joy, he will carry his attempts farther yet: he will level his assault against your righteousness also. He will endeavour to shake, yea, if it be possible, to destroy, the holiness you have already received, by your very expectation of receiving more, of attaining all the image of God.

6. The manner wherein he attempts this may partly appear from what has been already observed. For, first, by striking at our joy in the Lord, he strikes likewise at our holiness; seeing joy in the Holy Ghost is a precious means of promoting every holy temper; a

choice instrument of God, whereby he carries on much of his work in a believing soul. And it is a considerable help, not only to inward, but also to outward, holiness. It strengthens our hands to go on in the work of faith and in the labour of love, manfully to "fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life." It is peculiarly designed of God to be a balance both against inward and outward sufferings; to "lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees." Consequently, whatever damps our joy in the Lord, proportionably obstructs our holiness. And therefore, so far as Satan shakes our joy, he hinders our holiness also.

7. The same effect will ensue, if he can, by any means, either destroy or shake our peace. For the peace of God is another precious means of advancing the image of God in us. There is scarce a greater help to holiness than this, a continual tranquillity of spirit, the evenness of a mind stayed upon God, a calm repose in the blood of Jesus. And without this, it is scarce possible to "grow in grace," and in the vital "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." For all fear (unless the tender filial fear) freezes and benumbs the soul. It binds up all the springs of spiritual life, and stops all motion of the heart toward God. And doubt, as it were, bemires the soul, so that it sticks fast in the deep clay. Therefore, in the same proportion as either of these prevails, our growth in holiness is hindered.

8. At the same time that our wise adversary endeavours to make our conviction of the necessity of perfect love an occasion of shaking our peace by doubts and fears, he endeavours to weaken, if not destroy our faith. Indeed these are inseparably connected, so that they must stand or fall together. So long as faith subsists, we remain in peace; our heart stands fast, while it believes in the Lord. But if we let go our faith, our filial confidence in a loving, pardoning God, our peace is at an end, the very foundation on which it stood being overthrown. And this is the only founda-

tion of holiness as well as of peace; consequently whatever strikes at this, strikes at the very root of all holiness: for without this faith, without an abiding sense that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me, without a continuing conviction that God for Christ's sake is merciful to me a sinner, it is impossible that I should love God: "We love him, because he first loved us;" and in proportion to the strength and clearness of our conviction that he hath loved us, and accepted us in his Son. And unless we love God, it is not possible that we should love our neighbour as ourselves; nor, consequently, that we should have any right affections, either toward God, or toward man. It evidently follows, that whatever weakens our faith, must, in the same degree, obstruct our holiness; and this is not only the most effectual, but also the most compendious, way of destroying all holiness; seeing it does not affect any one Christian temper, any single grace or fruit of the Spirit, but, so far as it succeeds, tears up the very root of the whole work of God.

9. No marvel, therefore, that the ruler of the darkness of this world should here put forth all his strength. And so we find by experience. For it is far easier to conceive than it is to express, the unspeakable violence wherewith this temptation is frequently urged on them who hunger and thirst after righteousness. When they see, in a strong and clear light, on the one hand, the desperate wickedness of their own hearts,—on the other hand, the unspotted holiness to which they are called in Christ Jesus; on the one hand, the depth of their own corruption, of their total alienation from God,—on the other, the height of the glory of God, that image of the Holy One, wherein they are to be renewed; there is, many times, no spirit left in them; they could almost cry out, "With God this is impossible!" They are ready to give up both faith and hope; to cast away that very confidence, whereby they are to overcome all things, through Christ strengthening them; whereby,

"after they have done the will of God," they are to "receive the promise."

10. And if they "hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end," they shall undoubtedly receive the promise of God, reaching through both time and eternity. But here is another snare laid for our feet: while we earnestly pant for that part of the promise which is to be accomplished here, "for the glorious liberty of the children of God," we may be led unawares from the consideration of the glory which shall hereafter be revealed. Our eye may be insensibly turned aside from that crown which the righteous Judge hath promised to give at that day "to all that love his appearing;" and we may be drawn away from the view of that incorruptible inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us. But this also would be a loss to our souls, and an obstruction to our holiness. For to walk in the continual sight of our goal, is a needful help in our running the race that is set before us. This it was, the having "respect unto the recompense of the reward," which, of old time, encouraged Moses, rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Nay, it is expressly said of a greater than he, that, "for the joy that was set before Him, he endured the cross and despised the shame," till he "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Whence we may easily infer, how much more needful for us is the view of that joy set before us, that we may endure whatever cross the wisdom of God lays upon us, and press on through holiness to glory.

11. But while we are reaching to this, as well as to that glorious liberty which is preparatory to it, we may be in danger of falling into another snare of the devil, wherein he labours to entangle the children of God. We may take too much thought for to-morrow, so as to neglect the improvement of to-day. We may so expect perfect love, as not to use that which is already shed

abroad in our hearts. There have not been wanting instances of those who have greatly suffered hereby. They were so taken up with what they were to receive hereafter, as utterly to neglect what they had already received. In expectation of having five talents more, they buried their one talent in the earth. At least, they did not improve it as they might have done, to the glory of God and the good of their own souls.

12. Thus does the subtle adversary of God and man endeavour to make void the counsel of God, by dividing the Gospel against itself, and making one part of it overthrow the other; while the first work of God in the soul is destroyed by the expectation of his perfect work. We have seen several of the ways wherein he attempts this, by cutting off, as it were, the springs of holiness. But this he likewise does more directly by making that blessed hope an occasion of unholy tempers.

13. Thus, whenever our heart is eagerly athirst for all the great and precious promises; when we pant after the fulness of God, as the hart after the water-brook; when our soul breaketh out in fervent desire, "Why are his chariot-wheels so long a-coming?"—he will not neglect the opportunity of tempting us to murmur against God. He will use all his wisdom, and all his strength, if haply, in an unguarded hour, we may be influenced to repine at our Lord for thus delaying his coming. At least, he will labour to excite some degree of fretfulness or impatience; and, perhaps, of envy at those whom we believe already to have attained the prize of our high calling. He well knows, that by giving way to any of these tempers, we are pulling down the very thing we would build up. By *thus* following after perfect holiness, we become more unholy than before. Yea, there is great danger that our last state should be worse than the first; like them of whom the apostle speaks in those dreadful words, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them."

14. And from hence he hopes to reap another advantage; even to bring up an evil report of the good way. He is sensible, how few are able to distinguish (and too many are not willing so to do) between the accidental abuse, and the natural tendency, of a doctrine. These, therefore, will he continually blend together, with regard to the doctrine of Christian perfection; in order to prejudice the minds of unwary men against the glorious promises of God. And how frequently, how generally, I had almost said how universally, has he prevailed herein! For who is there that observes any of these accidental ill effects of this doctrine, and does not immediately conclude, this is its natural tendency; and does not readily cry out, "See, these are the fruits" (meaning the natural, necessary fruits) "of such doctrine?" Not so: they are fruits which may accidentally spring from the abuse of a great and precious truth: but the abuse of this, or any other scriptural doctrine, does by no means destroy its use. Neither can the unfaithfulness of man, perverting his right way, make the promise of God of no effect. No: let God be true, and every man a liar. The word of the Lord, it shall stand. "Faithful is he that hath promised: he also will do it." Let not us then be "removed from the hope of the gospel." Rather let us observe, which was the second thing proposed, how we may retort these fiery darts of the wicked one; how we may rise the higher by what he intends for an occasion of our falling.

II. 1. And, first, does Satan endeavour to damp your joy in the Lord, by the consideration of your sinfulness: added to this, that without entire, universal holiness, no man can see the Lord? You may cast back this dart upon his own head, while, through the grace of God, the more you feel of your own vileness, the more you rejoice in confident hope, that all this shall be done away. While you hold fast this hope, every evil temper you feel, though you hate it with a perfect hatred, may be a means, not of lessening your

humble joy, but rather of increasing it. "This and this," may you say, "shall likewise perish from the presence of the Lord. Like as the wax melteth at the fire, so shall this melt away before his face." By this means, the greater that change is which remains to be wrought in your soul, the more you may triumph in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of your salvation, who hath done so great things for you already, and will do so much greater things than these.

2. Secondly: the more vehemently he assaults your peace with that suggestion, "God is holy; you are unholy; you are immensely distant from that holiness without which you cannot see God: how then can you be in the favour of God? How can you fancy you are justified?"—take the more earnest heed to hold fast that, "Not by works of righteousness which I have done, I am found in him: I am accepted in the Beloved, not having my own righteousness, (as the cause, either in whole or in part, of our justification before God,) but that which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Oh, bind this about your neck: write it upon the table of thy heart. Wear it as a bracelet upon thy arm, as frontlets between thine eyes: "I am justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." Value and esteem, more and more, that precious truth, "By grace we are saved through faith." Admire, more and more, the free grace of God, in so loving the world as to give "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." So shall the sense of the sinfulness you feel, on the one hand, and of the holiness you expect, on the other, both contribute to establish your peace, and to make it flow as a river. So shall that peace flow on with an even stream, in spite of all those mountains of ungodliness, which shall become a plain in the day when the Lord cometh to take full possession of your heart. Neither will sickness, or pain, or the approach of death, occasion any doubt or fear. You know a day, an hour, a moment,

with God, is as a thousand years. He cannot be straitened for time wherein to work whatever remains to be done in your soul. And God's time is always the best time. Therefore be thou careful for nothing: only make thy requests known unto Him, and that, not with doubt or fear, but thanksgiving; as being previously assured, He cannot withhold from thee any manner of thing that is good.

3. Thirdly: the more you are tempted to give up your shield, to cast away your faith, your confidence in his love, so much the more take heed that you hold fast that whereunto you have attained; so much the more labour to stir up the gift of God which is in you. Never let that slip, "I have 'an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;' and, 'The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'" Be this thy glory, and crown of rejoicing; and see that no one take thy crown. Hold that fast: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:" and, "I now 'have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.'" Thus, being filled with all peace and joy in believing, press on, in the peace and joy of faith, to the renewal of thy whole soul in the image of Him that created thee! Meanwhile, cry continually to God, that thou mayest see that prize of thy high calling, not as Satan represents it, in a horrid, dreadful shape, but in its genuine, native beauty; not as something that must be, or thou wilt go to hell, but as what may be, to lead thee to heaven. Look upon it as the most desirable gift which is in all the stores of the rich mercies of God. Beholding it in this true point of light, thou wilt hunger after it more and more; thy whole soul will be athirst for God, and for this glorious conformity to his likeness; and, having received a good hope of this, and strong consolation through grace, thou wilt no more be weary or faint in thy mind, but wilt follow on till thou attainest.

4 In the same power of faith, press on to glory.

Indeed, this is the same prospect still. God hath joined from the beginning, pardon, holiness, heaven. And why should man put them asunder? Oh, beware of this! Let not one link of the golden chain be broken. "God for Christ's sake hath forgiven me. He is now renewing me in his own image. Shortly he will make me meet for himself, and take me to stand before his face. I, whom he hath justified through the blood of his Son, being thoroughly sanctified by his Spirit, shall quickly ascend to the 'New Jerusalem, the city of the living God.' Yet a little while, and I shall 'come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' How soon will these shadows flee away, and the day of eternity dawn upon me! How soon shall I drink of 'the river of the water of life, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb! There all his servants shall praise him, and shall see his face, and his name shall be upon their foreheads. And no night shall be there; and they have no need of a candle, or the light of the sun. For the Lord God enlighteneth them, and they shall reign for ever and ever.'"

5. And if you thus "taste of the good word, and of the powers of the world to come," you will not murmur against God, because you are not yet "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Instead of repining at your not being wholly delivered, you will praise God for thus far delivering you. You will magnify God for what he hath done, and take it as an earnest of what he will do. You will not fret against him, because you are not yet renewed, but bless him because you shall be; and because "now is your salvation" from all sin "nearer than when you" first "believed." Instead of uselessly tormenting yourself because the time is not fully come, you will calmly and quietly wait for it, knowing that it "will come, and will not tarry." You may therefore the more cheerfully endure, as yet, the burden of sin that still remains in you, because it will

not always remain. Yet a little while, and it shall be clean gone. Only "tarry thou the Lord's leisure:" be strong, and "he shall comfort thy heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord!"

6. And if you see any who appear (so far as man can judge, but God alone searcheth the hearts) to be already partakers of their hope, already "made perfect in love;" far from envying the grace of God in them, let it rejoice and comfort your heart. Glorify God for their sake! "If one member is honoured," shall not "all the members rejoice with it?" Instead of jealousy or evil surmising concerning them, praise God for the consolation! Rejoice in having a fresh proof of the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling all his promises; and stir yourself up the more to "apprehend that for which you are also apprehended of Christ Jesus!"

7. In order to this, redeem the time. Improve the present moment. Buy up every opportunity of growing in grace, or of doing good. Let not the thought of receiving more grace to-morrow, make you negligent of to-day. You have one talent now: if you expect five more, so much the rather improve that you have. And the more you expect to receive hereafter, the more labour for God now. Sufficient for the day is the grace thereof. God is now pouring his benefits upon you: now approve yourself a faithful steward of the present grace of God. Whatever may be to-morrow, give all diligence to-day to "add to your faith, courage, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness," and the fear of God, till you attain that pure and perfect love! Let these things be now "in you, and abound!" Be not now slothful or unfruitful: "so shall an entrance be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

8. Lastly: if in time past you have abused this blessed hope of being holy as he is holy, yet do not therefore cast it away. Let the abuse cease, the use remain. Use it now to the more abundant glory of God, and profit of your own soul. In steadfast faith, in calm

tranquillity of spirit, in full assurance of hope, rejoicing evermore for what God hath done, press ye on unto perfection! Daily growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and going on from strength to strength, in resignation, in patience, in humble thankfulness for what ye have attained, and for what ye shall, run the race set before you, "looking unto Jesus," till, through perfect love, ye enter into his glory!

M

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of the devices of Satan?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is the inward kingdom of heaven?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) How do we expect to be made perfect in love?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What do we expect, according to God's promise?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What device of Satan is here mentioned?

Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What does Mr. Wesley propose to point out, first?

Ques. 7. (I. 2.) If Satan can damp our joy, what will he next attack?

Ques. 8. (I. 3.) What argument of Satan is here mentioned?

Ques. 9. (I. 4.) When is this argument specially employed?

Ques. 10. (I. 5.) What is called the masterpiece of subtlety?

Ques. 11. (I. 6.) How does he attempt this?

Ques. 12. (I. 7.) What is said of his shaking our peace?

Ques. 13. (I. 8.) What else does he endeavor to destroy?

Ques. 14. (I. 9.) What do we find by experience?

Ques. 15. (I. 10.) What is said of holding fast to the end?

Ques. 16. (I. 11.) What other snare is prepared for us?

Ques. 17. (I. 12.) What does the subtle adversary endeavor to do?

Ques. 18. (I. 13.) What is said of the temptation to murmur?

Ques. 19. (I. 14.) What other advantage does he hope to reap?

Ques. 20. (II. 1.) How does Satan try to damp our joy?

Ques. 21. (II. 2.) What suggestion does he make?

Ques. 22. (II. 3.) What is mentioned thirdly?

Ques. 23. (II. 4.) What has God joined together?

Ques. 24. (II. 5.) What is said of those who have tasted of the good word?

Ques. 25. (II. 5.) How will a true Christian feel concerning the blessings received from God?

Ques. 26. (II. 6.) Can there be any room in a renewed heart for envy toward those who have made profession of perfect love?

Ques. 27. (II. 7.) What exhortation have we here? What is meant by "redeeming the time?"

Ques. 28. (II. 8.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLIII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

This sermon was first published in tract form in the year 1765, and incorporated in the standard sermons in 1771. It, with the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection," published the year following, may be taken as representing Mr. Wesley's most mature views on this subject. For five years a remarkable outpouring of the spirit of perfect love had been in progress in the Methodist Societies, giving Mr. Wesley abundant opportunity to study the subject from every point of view in the light of living experience. It was during the progress of this work that many important points in the definition of Christian perfection were guarded against Antinomianism on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other, and the important advices to those who are saved from sin were originally written.

The present sermon deals particularly with the way to the attainment of Christian perfection. Dr. Whitehead—and Mr. Tyerman queries with him—seems to think that it was only at this time that Mr. Wesley came to believe and teach that this grace might be received in a moment, by simple faith. Undoubtedly, as Mr. Wesley expressly states, he had held the doctrine of Christian perfection from the beginning of his evangelical career. He had held also that it was attained by faith, but laid more stress upon the antecedent gradual work of mortification and universal obedience. But at the period of the present we think the following points became more perfectly clear in Mr. Wesley's teaching, and *probably in his own experience*, inasmuch as at

the very commencement (1760) he speaks of the work of God as being "*very helpful to his own soul.*"

1. The nature of sanctifying faith, which is as clearly defined in the present sermon as is justifying faith in the first sermon. The relation of that previous definition to his own experience may lead us to think of a *similar* relation here.

2. The relation of the preliminary gradual work of the Spirit, in what he calls the repentance of believers, to this definite faith and to the higher state of grace is more clearly defined than ever before. The sermon on the repentance of believers was written two years later.

3. The doctrine of the witness or assurance of entire sanctification given by the Holy Spirit was now clearly propounded in his further thoughts on Christian perfection, though only indirectly referred to in the present sermon.

4. The entrance upon the conscious possession of this full salvation is made a grand point, a crisis of religious experience, just as the entrance upon the conscious possession of justification had been after the experience of May 24, 1738. This is not insisted on as indispensably necessary to its attainment, but Mr. Wesley has come now to think it "*infinitely desirable*" that this crisis should be thus definitely marked.

5. The unity of the process of salvation in the first and the second great crises of experience is clearly apparent. Both rest upon the atonement; both are the work of the Holy Spirit in a process of conviction leading to submission and faith, followed by a witness or assurance which merges into a permanent faith. The first crisis begins the work which the second carries on to perfection. This parallel Mr. Wesley carries out very fully.

6. Now Mr. Wesley begins to press the second crisis upon believers more strongly than ever before. He sometimes seems to go beyond the *drawing* which he deemed expedient in 1745.

7. We note in this sermon that the same prominence and honor is given to the Holy Spirit as in the doctrine of con-

version. This distinguishes Mr. Wesley's teaching from all forms of Antinomianism. There is an Antinomian perfectionism which, like the corresponding doctrine of justification, is merely assumed or imputed. Mr. Wesley does not attempt to force religious experiences by any merely intellectual processes or logical formularies. *The "divine conviction" must prepare every step.* This important truth characterizes his teaching throughout, and distinguishes it from many modern imitations. We cannot go on to perfection but by praying for the Spirit and being *led* by the Spirit. No process of consecration and faith will avail except that consecration be the result of deep conviction of inbred sin by the Holy Spirit, and that faith be of the operation of the Holy Ghost, a divine evidence and conviction. Mr. Wesley of course does not exclude our co-operation with the Spirit in the use of all means, but he never falls into that common error which leads only to a superficial imitation of the divine life.—*Burwash.*

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLIII.

The simplicity of religion. Its end is salvation; the means, faith.

I. What is salvation?

Not eternal happiness; it is a present thing. In the widest sense it includes prevenient grace. But specially it is justification and sanctification. Justification is pardon, the forgiveness of our sins, and our acceptance with God. This is procured by Christ. It is followed by peace and joy. At the same moment sanctification begins; we are inwardly renewed by the power of God. But this renewal is not yet perfect, though often supposed to be so. From the moment of this change a mortification of sin takes place, completed in entire sanctification, which is perfect love, excluding sin and filling the heart.

II. What is that faith through which we are saved? Faith generally is a divine evidence or conviction, including supernatural light and supernatural perception of that

light. More specifically, faith is a divine evidence or conviction that Christ loved me and gave himself for me. By this we receive Christ. This implies both assurance from God and adherence, *the latter following the former*. By this faith we are saved.

III. How are we saved by this faith?

1. As the condition, and the only condition, of justification. None are saved without this; every one who has this is justified. Repentance necessary, but not in the same sense or in the same degree. It is *indirectly* necessary, and its fruits only conditionally.

2. As the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification. A repentance also precedes this, which is a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of sin still remaining in our hearts, and hence still cleaving to all our actions; and a sense of our utter inability in ourselves. The fruits of this repentance are all good works of piety and of mercy. But, as before, these fruits are necessary only as there is opportunity, and this repentance is only remotely necessary *in order to the exercise of faith*. Hence, faith is the immediate and only condition. What is this faith whereby we are sanctified?

(1) A divine evidence and conviction that God hath promised this in his holy Word.

(2) A divine evidence and conviction that what he hath promised he is able to perform.

(3) A divine evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it now.

(4) A divine evidence and conviction that he doeth it. In that hour it is done.

It may be gradually wrought in some in the sense that they do not advert to the particular moment. But there is a moment in which we may be conscious of it, and we should look for it every day. *Why not now?*

SERMON XLIII.

THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION

"Ye are saved through faith."—EPH. ii. 8.

1. NOTHING can be more intricate, complex, and hard to be understood, than religion, as it has been often described. And this is not only true concerning the religion of the heathens, even many of the wisest of them, but concerning the religion of those also who were, in some sense, Christians; yea, and men of great name in the Christian world; men who seemed to be pillars thereof. Yet how easy to be understood, how plain and simple a thing, is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ; provided only that we take it in its native form, just as it is described in the oracles of God! It is exactly suited, by the wise Creator and Governor of the world, to the weak understanding and narrow capacity of man in his present state. How observable is this, both with regard to the end it proposes, and the means to attain that end! The end is, in one word, salvation; the means to attain it, faith.

2. It is easily discerned, that these two little words, I mean faith and salvation, include the substance of all the Bible; the marrow, as it were, of the whole Scripture. So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning them, and to form a true and accurate judgment concerning both the one and the other.

3. Let us, then, seriously inquire,

I. What is salvation?

II. What is that faith whereby we are saved? And,

III. How we are saved by it?

I. 1. And, first, let us inquire, What is salvation? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, "Abraham's bosom." It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death; or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question: "Ye *are saved*." It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, you are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, "Ye *have been* saved:" so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.

2. If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed "natural conscience," but more properly, "preventing grace;"—all the drawings of the Father; the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more;—all that light wherewith the Son of God "enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world;" showing every man "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God;"—all the convictions which his Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man; although it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.

3. But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts,—justification and sanctification.

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us, (commonly termed "the meritorious cause of our justification,") is

the blood and righteousness of Christ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till he "poured out his soul for the transgressors." The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, "a peace that passeth all understanding," and a "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God" "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit: there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel "the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us;" producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into "the mind which was in Christ Jesus."

5. How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, "I *feel* no sin; therefore, I *have* none: it does not *stir;* therefore, it does not *exist:* it has no *motion;* therefore, it has no *being!*"

6. But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return, and sin revives; showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; "the flesh lusting against the Spirit;" nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny, that although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and although his "Spirit" still "witnesseth with their spirits, that they are children of God;" yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these

frequently *stirring* in their heart, though not *conquering:* yea, perhaps, "thrusting sore at them that they may fall;" but the Lord is their help.

7. How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God! "The unskilful," or unexperienced, "when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were wellnigh burned up."

8. From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled "by the Spirit" to "mortify the deeds of the body," of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and are "zealous of good works," as we have opportunity, doing good to all men; while we walk in all His ordinances blameless, therein worshipping Him in spirit and in truth; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

9. It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification; for a full salvation from all our sins,—from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief; or, as the apostle expresses it, "go on unto perfection." But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love "rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in every thing giving thanks."

II. But what is that faith through which we are saved? This is the second point to be considered.

1. Faith, in general, is defined by the apostle, πραγματων ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων,—*an evidence*, a divine *evidence and conviction*, (the word means both,) *of things not seen;* not visible, not perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God, and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof. Accordingly, the Scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of "the eyes of" our "understanding being opened." By this twofold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural "eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard." We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being. And we see the *eternal world;* piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine *evidence* and *conviction* not only that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but also that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ;* that we receive him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that he is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

3. "But is this the *faith of assurance*, or *faith of adherence?*" The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The apostle says, "There is one faith, and one hope of

our calling;" one Christian, saving faith; "as there is one Lord," in whom we believe, and "one God and Father of us all." And it is certain, this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. For "he that believeth" with the true living faith "hath the witness in himself:" "the Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God." "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father;" giving him an assurance that he is so, and a child-like confidence in him. But let it be observed, that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. Therefore, confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith.

4. It is by this faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified; taking that word in its highest sense. But how are we justified and sanctified by faith? This is our third head of inquiry. And this being the main point in question, and a point of no ordinary importance, it will not be improper to give it a more distinct and particular consideration.

III. 1. And, first, how are we justified by faith? In what sense is this to be understood? I answer, Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition:* none is justified but he that believes: without faith no man is justified. And it is the *only condition:* this alone is sufficient for justification. Every one that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words: no man is justified till he believes; every man, when he believes, is justified.

2. "But does not God command us to repent also? Yea, and to 'bring forth fruits meet for repentance?'—to cease, for instance, from doing evil, and learn to do

well? And is not both the one and the other of the utmost necessity; insomuch that if we willingly neglect either, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification?"

God does undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all: therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*: for those fruits are only necessary *conditionally*; if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross: (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person!) but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified. Not in the *same sense*: for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

3. "But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith; but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?" So it has been roundly and vehemently affirmed for these five-and-twenty years but I have constantly declared just the contrary; and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified, in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith. And indeed the one of those great

truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition:* none is sanctified but he that believes without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition:* this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes: every man when he believes is sanctified.

4. "But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be 'zealous of good works?' Yea, are not these so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense; that is, perfected in love? Nay, can he grow at all in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favour of God? Do not you yourself allow all this, and continually assert it? But, if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification?"

5. I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification. It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received; he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God.

What is the inference we must draw herefrom? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works,—works of piety, as

well as works of mercy, (now properly so called, since they spring from faith,) are, in some sense, necessary to sanctification.

6 I say, "repentance rightly understood;" for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any "fear that hath torment." It is properly a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of the *sin* which still *remains* in our heart; of the φρονημα σαρκος, *the carnal mind*, which "does still *remain*" (as our church speaks) "even in them that are regenerate;" although it does no longer *reign;* it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of an heart bent to backsliding, of the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the spirit. Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to atheism, or idolatry; and, above all, to unbelief, whereby, in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever departing, more or less, from the living God.

7. With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts, there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives; still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them; something that could not endure the righteous judgment of God, were he extreme to mark what is done amiss. Where we least suspected it, we find a taint of pride, or self-will, of unbelief, or idolatry, so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins; and hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having any thing meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in

sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God, were it not for the blood of the covenant.

8. Experience shows that, together with the conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts, and *cleaving* to all our words and actions; as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur, were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood; one thing more is implied in this repentance; namely, a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action, but through his free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.

9. "But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?" First, all works of piety: such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet; receiving the supper of the Lord; searching the Scriptures, by hearing, reading, meditating; and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

10. Secondly, all works of mercy; whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men; such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as the endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the "fruits meet for repentance," which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed his children to wait for complete salvation.

11. Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemingly innocent opinion, that there is no sin in a believer; that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified. By totally preventing that repentance, it quite blocks up the way to sanctifi-

cation. There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart: consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.

12. Hence it may likewise appear, that there is no possible danger in *thus* expecting full salvation. For suppose we were mistaken, suppose no such blessing ever was or can be attained, yet we lose nothing: nay, that very expectation quickens us in using all the talents which God has given us; yea, in improving them all; so that when our Lord cometh, he will receive his own with increase.

13. But to return. Though it be allowed, that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation; yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree. Not in the *same degree:* for these fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them; otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail: he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified.—Not in the *same sense:* for this repentance and these fruits are only *remotely* necessary,—necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification. It remains, that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.

14. "But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified;—saved from sin, and perfected in love?" It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step farther. And one would imagine there needed not one word more

to satisfy a reasonable man of this, than the ancient promise, "Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." How clearly does this express the being perfected in love!—how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

15. It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised he is able to perform Admitting, therefore, that "with men it is impossible" to "bring a clean thing out of an unclean," to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing "with God all things are possible." And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks, it shall be done. God saith, "Let there be light; and there" is "light!"

16. It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that he is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will. And he cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons he is pleased to honour. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, 'Now is the day of salvation!" "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts!' "Behold, all things are now ready: come unto the marriage!"

17. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more,—a divine evidence and conviction that he doeth it. In that hour it is done: God says to the inmost soul, "According to thy faith be it unto thee!" Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean "from all unrighteousness." The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

18. "But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously?" Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some; I mean in this sense,—they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin "by the breath of his mouth," in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does; a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore look for it every moment. Look for it in the way above described, in all those *good works* whereunto thou art "created anew in Christ Jesus." There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first*, *before* you are sanctified. You think, I must first *be* or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are;* and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points,—expect it *by faith*, expect it *as you are*, and expect it *now*. To deny one of them, is to deny them all; to allow one, is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle; and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but "Christ *died*." And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing

why should you? Christ is ready; and he is all you want. He is waiting for you: he is at the door! Let your inmost soul cry out,

"Come in, come in, thou heavenly Guest!
Nor hence again remove;
But sup with me, and let the feast
Be everlasting love."

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLIII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is here said of religion?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What do the two words "faith" and "salvation" include?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What do we first inquire?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) Taken to its utmost extent, what does salvation include?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) With what are we at present concerned?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) When does sanctification begin?

Ques. 7. (I. 5.) What do newly converted persons imagine?

Ques. 8. (I. 6.) Are they soon undeceived? How?

Ques. 9. (I. 7.) What is said of Macarius? Who was he? *Ans.* A Christian writer of the fourth century.

Ques. 10. (I. 8.) When does the gradual work begin?

Ques. 11. (I. 9.) What does "perfection" mean?

Ques. 12. (II. 1.) How is faith defined by the apostle?

Ques. 13. (II. 2.) What does it mean in a more particular sense?

Ques. 14. (II. 3.) Does Scripture make a distinction between "faith of assurance" and "faith of adherence?"

Ques. 15. (II. 4.) How are we saved, justified, sanctified?

Ques. 16. (III. 1.) How are we justified by faith?

Ques. 17. (III. 2.) What is said of repentance?

Ques. 18. (III. 3.) What had been roundly asserted for twenty-five years? Was it true?

Ques. 19. (III. 4.) What is said of repentance after justification?

Ques. 20. (III. 5.) What does he allow?

Ques. 21. (III. 6.) What inference do we draw herefrom?

Ques. 22. (III. 7.) What is joined to the conviction of sin remaining in the heart?

Ques. 23. (III. 8.) What does experience show?

Ques. 24. (III. 9.) What is said of good works here?

Ques 25. (III. 10.) Of works of mercy?

Ques. 26. (III. 11.) What is here called a mischievous opinion?

Ques. 27. (III. 12.) What is said to appear from hence?

Ques. 28. (III. 13.) What is here said of repentance and its fruits?

Ques. 29 (III. 14.) What is sanctifying faith?

Ques. 30. (III. 15.) What is it, secondly?

Ques. 31. (III. 16.) What, thirdly?

Ques. 32. (III. 17.) What must still be added?

Ques. 33. (III. 18.) Is this work gradual or instantaneous? How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLIV.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Few subjects require more careful definition in the Arminian system than the doctrine of original sin. We must carefully avoid Pelagian and semi-Pelagian views on the one hand, and Augustinian determinism on the other. The controversial character of Mr. Wesley's treatise on original sin, while guarding the truth completely against the two former errors, leaves it open to misconception on the side of the latter. We note here what Mr. Wesley positively states, and further, what he omits to state. He states:

1. The absolute universality of sin.

2. That this universality arises from heart-sin, or a sinfulness in nature or character.

3. That this heart-sin is a birth-sin; not acquired, but inherited, born with us.

4. That this birth-sin is derived from Adam, and comes by a natural law.

5. That it originated in the first transgression. These fundamental points Mr. Wesley presents in the very words of Scripture.

6. He clearly states that this entire sin (actual sin, heart-sin, birth-sin, and the original sin) exposes man to the wrath of God, but he does not separate these four elements of our sinful estate, and assert with Calvin that guilt is imputed on account of *the original sin.* Even in the treatise on original sin Mr. Wesley seems to avoid the expression, though it is often used by the authors whom he quotes. When Dr. Taylor says, "Punishment always connotes guilt," he replies,

"It always connotes sin and suffering, and here are both. Adam sinned; his posterity suffer, and that in consequence of his sin." So, in discussing the proposition of the Westminster Catechism, "The guilt of Adam's first sin," when Dr. Taylor says, "Adam's first sin was attended with consequences which affect all his posterity, but we could not on account of his sin become obnoxious to punishment," Mr. Wesley replies, "By punishment I mean *evil* suffered on account of sin; and are we not obnoxious to any evil on account of Adam's sin?" And when he comes to the final proposition of the Westminster Catechism, "And justly liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come," Mr. Wesley says, "That all men are liable to these for Adam's sin alone I do not assert; but they are so for their own outward and inward sins, which, through their own fault, spring from the infection of their nature." Farther on he says, "I believe none ever did or ever will die eternally merely for the sin of our first father." In harmony with this Arminian limitation of the Augustinian doctrine are the excisions which Mr. Wesley made from the Ninth Article of the Church of England, which compare with Article Seven of the Discipline of our Church.

The omitted clause ("and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation") does not indeed take the highest ground of Calvinistic imputation of Adam's sins. It does not necessarily mean more than the mediate imputation of Placaeus. But even this mediate imputation Mr. Wesley would seem further to define by attaching its guilt to our own personal fault in neglect of the provided redemption. The universal provisions of the atonement enter at every point into Mr. Wesley's anthropology as well as into his soteriology. He knows nothing of a human race without a provided salvation in Christ; but under the present entire economy, by which the race is alike related to Adam and to Christ, he certainly does hold (and in harmony with Scripture) the guilt of original sin. This guilt, however, has no existence anteced-

ent to the existence of the guilty sinner, and hence cannot be the basis of any decree of predestination to wrath. We are "obnoxious to evil on account of Adam's sin," but only under an economy which brings us grace through Christ's righteousness, and thus final condemnation must be the result of our personal fault in the neglect of the provided grace. Every element of the Augustinian doctrine which can be proved from Scripture is thus not only taught by Mr Wesley, but is in harmony with his entire doctrinal system.

In regard to the extent of human depravity Mr. Wesley's teaching is in harmony with the Augustinian Confessions; it is a total inability to good, "without the grace of God preventing us that we may have good will, and working with us when we have that good will."—*Burwash.*

In the treatment of this subject the student must not overlook the fact that, notwithstanding the harmony of Mr. Wesley's views with the Augustinian Confessions, so far as the *extent* of human depravity is concerned, there is a radical difference between the two systems. The Augustinian and Calvinistic Confessions limit the enabling or preventing grace of God to the *elect;* Mr. Wesley declares it to be common to *all men* as subjects of the atonement of Christ. One system recognizes a partial atonement; the persons redeemed are called, receive "effectual grace," and are infallibly saved. The other system proclaims universal atonement and enabling grace to all men, the crisis of the soul's destiny being determined by voluntary acceptance or rejection of the salvation through Christ. In other words, all men are powerless to help themselves by nature, but grace supplies what nature lacks, and thus the responsibility is placed upon the sinner who rejects the office of the Redeemer. The agreement of this latter system with the declarations of Scripture is so clear and palpable that metaphysical distinctions and the subtleties of logic are multiplied in the vain attempt to show that the Augustinian theory does not make God responsible for the sinner's rejection of Christ. The only effect produced, however, is to make the pulpit

declare what the creed denies. The Arminian system teaches nothing in the creed that is not preached in the revival service.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLIV.

Fair pictures of human nature have been drawn by ancient and modern writers. They are readily received, but agree not with God's Word, which declares that by one man's disobedience all were constituted sinners; that in Adam all died; that he begat a son in his own likeness, since "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Thus we are by nature dead in trespasses and in sins, being shapened in iniquity and conceived in sin. Hence the absolute universality of actual transgression.

I. Let us show what men were before the flood. The account is of "man," the whole race. Every imagination includes every thing that is fabricated within. It is only evil, without intermixture of good; and continually, without cessation.

II. Are men the same now? So say David, Isaiah, and the apostles. Experience confirms this. We are atheists, without knowledge, love, or fear of God; idolaters, serving pride, self-will, love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.

III. Hence we see: 1. The difference between Christianity and all other religions. They depend on natural goodness; Christianity alone recognizes man's real state. 2. That no religion is truly Christian which denies this fact. 3. That Christianity is essentially a healing of the soul.

SERMON XLIV.

ORIGINAL SIN.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."—GEN. vi. 5.

1. How widely different is this from the fair pictures of human nature which men have drawn in all ages! The writings of many of the ancients abound with gay descriptions of the dignity of man; whom some of them paint as having all virtue and happiness in his composition, or, at least, entirely in his power, without being beholden to any other being; yea, as self-sufficient, able to live on his own stock, and little inferior to God himself.

2. Nor have heathens alone, men who were guided in their researches by little more than the dim light of reason, but many likewise of them that bear the name of Christ, and to whom are entrusted the oracles of God, spoken as magnificently concerning the nature of man, as if it were all innocence and perfection. Accounts of this kind have particularly abounded in the present century; and perhaps in no part of the world more than in our own country. Here not a few persons of strong understanding, as well as extensive learning, have employed their utmost abilities to show, what they termed, "the fair side of human nature." And it must be acknowledged, that, if their accounts of him be just, man is still but "a little lower than the angels;" or, as the words may be more literally rendered, "a little less than God."

3. Is it any wonder, that these accounts are very readily received by the generality of men? For who is not easily persuaded to think favourably of himself? Accordingly, writers of this kind are most universally read, admired, applauded. And innumerable are the converts they have made, not only in the gay but the learned world. So that it is now quite unfashionable to talk otherwise, to say any thing to the disparagement of human nature; which is generally allowed, notwithstanding a few infirmities, to be very innocent, and wise, and virtuous!

4. But, in the mean time, what must we do with our Bibles?—for they never will agree with this. These accounts, however pleasing to flesh and blood, are utterly irreconcilable with the scriptural. The Scripture avers, that "by one man's disobedience all men were constituted sinners;" that "in Adam all died," spiritually died, lost the life and the image of God; that fallen sinful Adam then "begat a son in his own likeness;"—nor was it possible he should beget him in any other; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"—that consequently we, as well as other men, were by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," "without hope, without God in the world," and, therefore, "children of wrath;" that every man may say, "I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" that "there is no difference," in that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," of that glorious image of God wherein man was originally created. And hence, when "the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, he saw they were all gone out of the way; they were altogether become abominable, there was none righteous, no, not one," none that truly sought after God: just agreeable this, to what is declared by the Holy Ghost in the words above recited, "God saw," when he looked down from heaven before, "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth;" so great, that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

This is God's account of man: from which I shall take occasion, first, to show what men were before the flood: secondly, to inquire, whether they are not the same now: and, thirdly, to add some inferences.

I. 1. I am, first, by opening the words of the text, to show what men were before the flood. And we may fully depend on the account here given: for God saw it, and he cannot be deceived. He "saw that the wickedness of man was great:"—not of this or that man; not of a few men only; not barely of the greater part, but of man in general; of men universally. The word includes the whole human race, every partaker of human nature. And it is not easy for us to compute their numbers, to tell how many thousands and millions they were. The earth then retained much of its primeval beauty and original fruitfulness. The face of the globe was not rent and torn as it is now; and spring and summer went hand in hand. It is therefore probable, it afforded sustenance for far more inhabitants than it is now capable of sustaining; and these must be immensely multiplied, while men begat sons and daughters for seven or eight hundred years together. Yet, among all this inconceivable number, only "Noah found favour with God." He alone (perhaps including part of his household) was an exception from the universal wickedness, which, by the just judgment of God, in a short time after brought on universal destruction. All the rest were partakers in the same guilt as they were in the same punishment.

2. "God saw all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart;"—of his soul, his inward man, the spirit within him, the principle of all his inward and outward motions. He "saw all the imaginations:"—it is not possible to find a word of a more extensive signification. It includes whatever is formed, made, fabricated within; all that is or passes in the soul; every inclination, affection, passion, appetite; every temper, design, thought. It must of consequence include every word and action, as naturally flowing from

these fountains, and being either good or evil according to the fountain from which they severally flow.

3. Now God saw that all this, the whole thereof, was evil;—contrary to moral rectitude; contrary to the nature of God, which necessarily includes all good; contrary to the divine will, the eternal standard of good and evil; contrary to the pure, holy image of God, wherein man was originally created, and wherein he stood when God, surveying the works of his hands, saw them all to be very good; contrary to justice, mercy, and truth, and to the essential relations which each man bore to his Creator and his fellow-creatures.

4 But was there not good mingled with the evil? Was there not light intermixed with the darkness? No, none at all: "God saw that the whole imagination of the heart of man was only evil." It cannot indeed be denied but many of them, perhaps all, had good motions put into their heart; for the Spirit of God did then also "strive with man," if haply he might repent, more especially during that gracious reprieve, the hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing. But still "in his flesh dwelt no good thing:" all his nature was purely evil: it was wholly consistent with itself, and unmixed with any thing of an opposite nature.

5 However, it may still be matter of inquiry, "Was there no intermission of this evil? Were there no lucid intervals, wherein something good might be found in the heart of man?" We are not here to consider what the grace of God might occasionally work in his soul; and, abstracted from this, we have no reason to believe there was any intermission of that evil. For God, who "saw the whole imagination of the thoughts of his heart to be *only* evil," saw likewise, that it was always the same, that it "was only evil *continually*;" every year, every day, every hour, every moment. He never deviated into good.

II. Such is the authentic account of the whole race of mankind which he who knoweth what is in man, who

searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, hath left upon record for our instruction. Such were all men before God brought the flood upon the earth. We are, secondly, to inquire whether they are the same now.

1. And this is certain, the Scripture gives us no reason to think any otherwise of them. On the contrary, all the above-cited passages of Scripture refer to those who lived after the flood. It was above a thousand years after, that God declared by David, concerning the children of men, "They are all gone out of the way" of truth and holiness; "there is none righteous, no, not one." And to this bear all the prophets witness, in their several generations. So Isaiah, concerning God's peculiar people, (and certainly the heathens were in no better condition,) "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." The same account is given by all the apostles, yea, by the whole tenor of the oracles of God. From all these we learn, concerning man in his natural state, unassisted by the grace of God, that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is" still "evil, only evil," and that "continually."

2. And this account of the present state of man is confirmed by daily experience. It is true, the natural man discerns it not; and this is not to be wondered at. So long as a man born blind continues so, he is scarce sensible of his want: much less, could we suppose a place where all were born without sight, would they be sensible of the want of it. In like manner, so long as men remain in their natural blindness of understanding, they are not sensible of their spiritual wants, and of this in particular. But as soon as God opens the eyes of their understanding, they see the state they were in before; they are then deeply convinced, that "every man living," themselves especially, are, by nature, "altogether vanity;" that is, folly and ignorance, sin and wickedness.

3. We see when God opens our eyes, that we were

before αθεοι εν τω κοσμω,—*without God*, or rather, *atheists in the world*. We had, by nature, no knowledge of God, no acquaintance with him. It is true, as soon as we came to the use of reason, we learned "the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, from the things that are made." From the things that are seen we inferred the existence of an eternal, powerful Being, that is not seen. But still, although we acknowledged his being, we had no acquaintance with him. As we know there is an emperor of China, whom yet we do not know; so we knew there was a King of all the earth, yet we knew him not. Indeed, we could not by any of our natural faculties. By none of these could we attain the knowledge of God We could no more perceive him by our natural understanding, than we could see him with our eyes. For "no one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father revealeth him."

4. We read of an ancient king who, being desirous to know what was the *natural language* of men, in order to bring the matter to a certain issue, made the following experiment:—he ordered two infants, as soon as they were born, to be conveyed to a place prepared for them, where they were brought up without any instruction at all, and without ever hearing a human voice. And what was the event? Why, that when they were at length brought out of their confinement, they spake no language at all; they uttered only inarticulate sounds, like those of other animals. Were two infants in like manner to be brought up from the womb without being instructed in any religion, there is little room to doubt but (unless the grace of God interposed) the event would be just the same. They would have no religion at all: they would have no more knowledge of God than the beasts of the field, than the wild ass's colt. Such is natural religion, abstracted from traditional, and from the influences of God's Spirit!

5. And having no knowledge, we can have no love, of God: we cannot love him we know not. Most men *talk*, indeed, of loving God, and perhaps imagine they do; at least, few will acknowledge they do not love him: but the fact is too plain to be denied. No man loves God by nature, any more than he does a stone, or the earth he treads upon. What we love we delight in; but no man has naturally any delight in God. In our natural state we cannot conceive how any one should delight in him. We take no pleasure in him at all; he is utterly tasteless to us. To love God! it is far above, out of our sight. We cannot, naturally, attain unto it.

6. We have by nature, not only no love, but no fear of God. It is allowed, indeed, that most men have, sooner or later, a kind of senseless, irrational fear, properly called "superstition;" though the blundering Epicureans gave it the name of "religion." Yet even this is not natural, but acquired; chiefly by conversation or from example. By nature "God is not in all our thoughts:" we leave him to manage his own affairs, to sit quietly, as we imagine, in heaven, and leave us on earth to manage ours; so that we have no more of the fear of God before our eyes, than of the love of God in our hearts.

7. Thus are all men "atheists in the world." But atheism itself does not screen us from idolatry. In his natural state, every man born into the world is a rank idolater. Perhaps, indeed, we may not be such in the vulgar sense of the word. We do not, like the idolatrous heathens, worship molten or graven images. We do not bow down to the stock of a tree, to the work of our own hands. We do not pray to the angels or saints in heaven, any more than to the saints that are upon the earth. But what then? We have set up our idols in our hearts; and to these we bow down, and worship them: we worship ourselves, when we pay that honour to ourselves which is due to God only. Therefore, all pride is idolatry; it is ascribing to

ourselves what is due to God alone. And although pride was not made for man, yet where is the man that is born without it? But hereby we rob God of his unalienable right, and idolatrously usurp his glory.

8. But pride is not the only sort of idolatry which we are all by nature guilty of. Satan has stamped his own image on our heart in self-will also. "I will," said he, before he was cast out of heaven, "I will sit upon the sides of the north:" I will do my own will and pleasure, independently of that of my Creator. The same does every man born into the world say, and that in a thousand instances; nay, and avow it too, without ever blushing upon the account, without either fear or shame. Ask the man, "Why did you do this?" He answers, "Because I had a mind to it." What is this but, "Because it was my will?" that is, in effect, Because the devil and I are agreed; because Satan and I govern our actions by one and the same principle The will of God, meantime, is not in his thoughts, is not considered in the least degree; although it be the supreme rule of every intelligent creature, whether in heaven or earth, resulting from the essential, unalterable relation which all creatures bear to their Creator.

9. So far we bear the image of the devil and tread in his steps. But at the next step we leave Satan behind; we run into an idolatry whereof he is not guilty: I mean, love of the world; which is now as natural to every man, as to love his own will. What is more natural to us than to seek happiness in the creature, instead of the Creator?—to seek that satisfaction in the works of his hands, which can be found in God only? What more natural than "the desire of the flesh?" that is, of the pleasure of sense in every kind? Men, indeed, talk magnificently of despising these low pleasures; particularly men of learning and education. They affect to sit loose to the gratification of those appetites wherein they stand on a level with the beasts that perish. But it is mere affectation! for every man is conscious to

himself, that in this respect he is, by nature, a very beast. Sensual appetites, even those of the lowest kind, have, more or less, the dominion over him. They lead him captive; they drag him to and fro, in spite of his boasted reason. The man, with all his good breeding, and other accomplishments, has no pre-eminence over the goat: nay, it is much to be doubted whether the beast has not the pre-eminence over him. Certainly he has, if we may hearken to one of their modern oracles, who very decently tells us,

> "Once in a season beasts too taste of love;
> Only the beast of reason is its slave,
> And in that folly drudges all the year."

A considerable difference indeed, it must be allowed, there is between man and man, arising (besides that wrought by preventing grace) from difference of constitution and of education. But, notwithstanding this, who, that is not utterly ignorant of himself, can here cast the first stone at another? Who can abide the test of our blessed Lord's comment on the Seventh Commandment?—"He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." So that one knows not which to wonder at most, the ignorance or the insolence of those men who speak with such disdain of them that are overcome by desires which every man has felt in his own breast; the desire of every pleasure of sense, innocent or not, being natural to every child of man.

10. And so is "the desire of the eye:" the desire of the pleasures of the imagination. These arise either from great, or beautiful, or uncommon objects;—if the two former do not coincide with the latter: for perhaps it would appear, upon a diligent inquiry, that neither grand nor beautiful objects please any longer than they are new; that when the novelty of them is over, the greatest part, at least, of the pleasure they give is over; and in the same proportion as they become familiar, they become flat and insipid. But let us experience this over so often, the same desire will remain still. The

inbred thirst continues fixed in the soul; nay, the more it is indulged, the more it increases, and incites us to follow after another, and yet another, object; although we leave every one with an abortive hope, and a deluded expectation. Yea,

> "The hoary fool, who many days
> Has struggled with continued sorrow,
> Renews his hope, and fondly lays
> The desperate bet upon to-morrow!
>
> "To-morrow comes! 'Tis noon! 'Tis night!
> This day, like all the former, flies:
> Yet on he goes, to seek delight
> To-morrow, till to-night he dies!"

11. A third symptom of this fatal disease,—the love of the world, which is so deeply rooted in our nature, is "the pride of life;" the desire of praise, of the honour that cometh of men. This the greatest admirers of human nature allow to be strictly natural; as natural as the sight, or hearing, or any other of the external senses. And are they ashamed of it, even men of letters, men of refined and improved understanding? So far from it, that they glory therein! They applaud themselves for their love of applause! Yea, eminent Christians, so called, make no difficulty of adopting the saying of the old vain heathen, "*Animi dissoluti est et nequam negligere quid de se homines sentiant:*" "Not to regard what men think of us is the mark of a wicked and abandoned mind." So that to go calm and unmoved through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, is with them a sign of one that is, indeed, not fit to live: "Away with such a fellow from the earth!" But would one imagine that these men had ever heard of Jesus Christ, or his apostles; or that they knew who it was that said, "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only?" But if this be really so, if it be impossible to believe, and consequently to please God, so long as we receive or seek honour one of another

and seek not the honour that cometh of God only; then in what a condition are all mankind! the Christians as well as heathens! since they all seek honour one of another! since it is as natural for them so to do, themselves being the judges, as it is to see the light which strikes upon their eye, or to hear the sound which enters their ear; yea, since they account it a sign of a virtuous mind, to seek the praise of men, and of a vicious one to be content with the honour that cometh of God only!

III. 1. I proceed to draw a few inferences from what has been said. And, first, from hence we may learn one grand fundamental difference between Christianity, considered as a system of doctrines, and the most refined heathenism. Many of the ancient heathens have largely described the vices of particular men. They have spoken much against their covetousness, or cruelty; their luxury, or prodigality. Some have dared to say, that "no man is born without vices of one kind or another." But still, as none of them were apprized of the fall of man, so none of them knew of his total corruption. They knew not that all men were empty of all good, and filled with all manner of evil. They were wholly ignorant of the entire depravation of the whole human nature, of every man born into the world, in every faculty of his soul, not so much by those particular vices which reign in particular persons, as by the general flood of atheism and idolatry, of pride, self-will, and love of the world. This, therefore, is the first grand distinguishing point between heathenism and Christianity. The one acknowledges that many men are infected with many vices, and even born with a proneness to them; but supposes, withal, that in some the natural good much overbalances the evil: the other declares that all men are "conceived in sin," and "shapen in wickedness;"—that hence there is in every man a "carnal mind, which is enmity against God; which is not, cannot be, subject to" his "law;" and which so infects the whole soul, that "there dwelleth in" him, "in his flesh," in his natural state, "no good

thing;" but "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil," only evil, and that "continually."

2. Hence we may, secondly, learn, that all who deny this (call it "original sin," or by any other title) are but heathens still, in the fundamental point which differences heathenism from Christianity. They may, indeed, allow, that men have many vices; that some are born with us; and that, consequently, we are not born altogether so wise or so virtuous as we should be; there being few that will roundly affirm, "We are born with as much propensity to good as to evil; and that every man is, by nature, as virtuous and wise as Adam was at his creation." But here is the *shibboleth:* Is man by nature filled with all manner of evil? Is he void of all good? Is he wholly fallen? Is his soul totally corrupted? Or, to come back to the text, is "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually?" Allow this, and you are so far a Christian Deny it, and you are but a heathen still.

3. We may learn from hence, in the third place, what is the proper nature of religion, of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is θεραπεια ψυχης, God's method of *healing a soul* which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies medicines to heal this sickness; to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our atheism by the knowledge of himself, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and of the things of God,—in particular of this important truth, "Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." By repentance and lowliness of heart, the deadly disease of pride is healed; that of self-will by resignation, a meek and thankful submission to the will of God; and for the love of the world in all its branches, the love of God is the sovereign remedy. Now, this is properly religion, "faith" thus "working by love;" working the genuine meek humility, entire deadness to the world, with a loving, thankful acquiescence in, and conformity to, the whole will and word of God.

4. Indeed, if man were not thus fallen, there would be no need of all this. There would be no occasion for this work in the heart, this renewal in the spirit of our mind. The superfluity of godliness would then be a more proper expression than the "superfluity of naughtiness." For an outside religion, without any godliness at all, would suffice to all rational intents and purposes. It does, accordingly, suffice, in the judgment of those who deny this corruption of our nature. They make very little more of religion than the famous Mr. Hobbes did of reason. According to him, reason is only "a well-ordered train of words:" according to them, religion is only a well-ordered train of words and actions. And they speak consistently with themselves; for if the inside be not full of wickedness, if this be clean already, what remains, but to "cleanse the outside of the cup?" Outward reformation, if their supposition be just, is indeed the one thing needful.

5. But ye have not so learned the oracles of God. Ye know, that He who seeth what is in man gives a far different account both of nature and grace, of our fall and our recovery. Ye know that the great end of religion is, to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of Him that created it, is no other than a poor farce, and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul. Oh, beware of all those teachers of lies, who would palm this upon you for Christianity! Regard them not, although they should come unto you with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness; with all smoothness of language, all decency, yea, beauty and elegance of expression, all professions of earnest good-will to you, and reverence for the Holy Scriptures. Keep to the plain, old faith, "once delivered to the saints," and delivered by the Spirit of God to our hearts Know your disease

Know your cure! Ye were born in sin: therefore, "ye must be born again," born of God. By nature ye are wholly corrupted: by grace ye shall be wholly renewed. In Adam ye all died: in the second Adam, in Christ, ye are all made alive. "You that were dead in sins hath he quickened:" he hath already given you a principle of life, even faith in him who loved you and gave himself for you! Now, "go on from faith to faith," until your whole sickness be healed, and all that "mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!"

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLIV.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of the fair pictures of human nature drawn in all ages?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said of others besides heathens?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is said of the disposition to receive these pictures?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What is said of the Bible? Of God's account of man?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What does he propose to show first?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What is said of God's inspection of the inward man?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) Was this spiritual man in a state of righteousness?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) Was there any thing good in him?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) What is still a matter of inquiry?

Ques. 10. (II. 1.) What is said to be certain? Of whom does the account in Genesis speak? *Ans.* Of the people living at the time of the flood. We learn from Moses that the last and most aggravating offense committed was the destruction of the family, and thereby the State, or society itself. God was not in any of their thoughts.

Ques. 11. (II. 2.) How is this account of man confirmed?

Ques. 12. (II. 3.) What do we see when God opens our eyes?

Ques. 13. (II. 4.) What experiment was conducted by an ancient king?

Ques. 14. (II. 5.) What follows having no knowledge of God?

Ques. 15. (II. 6.) Have we, by nature, any fear or love of God?

Ques. 16. (II. 7.) What are all men called? In what sense are they atheists?

Ques. 17. (II. 8.) What other kind of idolatry is mentioned?

Ques. 18. (II. 9.) Whose image do we bear?

Ques. 19. (II. 10.) What is "the desire of the eye?"

Ques. 20. (II. 11.) What is a third symptom of this disease?

Ques. 21. (III. 1.) What does he now proceed to do? What is the first?

Ques. 22. (III. 2.) What may we secondly learn?

Ques. 23. (III. 3.) What do we learn in the third place? What is the religion of Christ said to be? What does the Great Physician do?

Ques. 24. (III. 4.) Would this work be necessary if man was not a fallen being?

Ques. 25 (III. 4.) What is said of Mr. Hobbes? How are these opinions compared? What did Hobbes make of reason? What do these persons make religion to be?

Ques. 26. (III. 5.) What is said of the true teaching on this subject? What do the divine oracles teach us?

Ques. 27. (III. 5.) How does the discourse conclude?

SERMON XLV.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

We have already remarked the distinction between the Wesleyan view of regeneration and the views of antecedent writers. Mr. Wesley first clearly distinguishes regeneration as the instantaneous beginning of the soul's conscious life of love to God. Although the view of the new birth here set forth is precisely the same as that given in Sermon XVIII., two additional points of the doctrine are here proposed. First, the relation of the new birth to original sin is defined. The fundamental element in original sin being not original guilt, but depravity, set forth as spiritual death, the new birth is not an absolution, but a new life. Secondly, the relation of the new birth to sanctification is also defined; not as a process of which sanctification is a part, but as a starting-point from which sanctification proceeds. These definitions are both characteristic of Wesleyan theology.

Touching the relation of the new birth to baptism, the present sermon takes much the same ground as the eighteenth. About this time he published a short treatise on baptism, in which his own views are clearly defined. In answer to the question, "What are the benefits we receive by baptism?" we have the following heads:

1. The washing away of the guilt of original sin.

2. By baptism we enter into the covenant of God.

3. By baptism we are admitted into the Church, and consequently made members of Christ, its head.

4. By baptism we who were the children of wrath are made the children of God. "This regeneration" he ex-

plains to be not outward, but "by adoption and grace." "A principle of grace is infused which will not be wholly taken away unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness."

5. In consequence hereof we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

It thus appears that Mr. Wesley's own views as a Churchman were clearly defined, but that he did not intend to impose those views on his followers. Hence the peculiar mode of statement in these two sermons.

There is no contradiction of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. There is the distinct avowal of the doctrine as the doctrine of the Church of England, but it is only as the doctrine of the Church of England that it is so avowed. *It does not enter into this preaching* either as the basis of appeal, or as a motive to duty, or as a ground of hope. It is, in fact, mentioned only to guard against the dangerous results to which it often led. We therefore conclude that baptismal regeneration is in no part *of the doctrines of these sermons.—Burwash.*

In the preceding statement Prof. Burwash has overlooked an important fact. The tract on baptism published by Mr. Wesley in 1756 was written by his father, Rev. Samuel Wesley, sr., rector of Epworth. It was an unfortunate mistake that included this tract among the works of Mr. Wesley. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is distinctly taught in the tract, and against this radical error the whole tenor of Wesleyan theology is a consistent and effective remonstrance. It is scarcely possible to conceive that the logical mind of John Wesley could entertain a belief in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in infancy, and yet contend for a second regeneration in adult life. This would imply the existence of *three* births—the natural birth, the baptismal birth, and the spiritual birth of an adult believer.

In making a just survey of Mr. Wesley's theology, especially upon the point in question, we are compelled to consider his personal relations to the Church of England.

As a minister of that Church, after years of diligent inquiry, in which his soul was in a state of profound unrest and disquietude, he became personally the subject of the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ. That the Church of England taught this doctrine he was convinced from the plainest testimonies in her Articles and authorized Homilies. But on more than one subject the language of the Church standards was incapable of reconciliation. Whilst the new birth as a spiritual change consequent upon the voluntary acceptance of Christ was clearly taught in the Articles and Homilies, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was taught in the Church Catechism. To reconcile the two is a task that has never been, and we may safely say can never be, accomplished. One doctrine excludes the other. Hence the Evangelical or Low-church party in England either deny the doctrine taught in the Catechism or so explain away its force as to make the regeneration wrought in baptism to signify a mere change of *state*, without any spiritual change as the necessary effect of the ordinance. On the other hand, the High-churchmen accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and deny Mr. Wesley's doctrine of the new birth. No party accepts both doctrines, as they logically exclude each other.

The fact of his teaching clearly and without the shadow of reservation the doctrine of the new birth in adult life proves that Mr. Wesley did not and could not accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But he refused to make an issue in terms with the Catechism, and, as the controversy on the subject of baptism had no prominence in his day, he simply alludes to the teaching of the Church on the subject of infant baptism without indorsing it.

We think this is the natural explanation of what seems to the casual reader a contradiction and manifest inconsistency in the writings of Mr. Wesley. If he could have foreseen the use that has been made of the tract on baptism, and even the use that has been made of Paragraph 2, Division IV. of this sermon, we can scarcely doubt that his language would have been more explicit.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLV.

Justification and regeneration are the fundamentals in religion. The first what God does for us, the second what he does in us; one in point of time, though justification precedes in order of thought.

I. The foundation of the doctrine of the new birth. God made man in his moral image, but not immutable. By disobedience he fell and became dead to God. Hence all his descendants are born in this state of spiritual death. Hence we must be born again.

II. The nature of this new birth.

This does not propose a philosophical explanation. The term used by the Jews of the outward form of adoption into the family of Abraham by baptism and circumcision. But here even Nicodemus understood by it something more than the outward form. Analogy of our entrance upon the spiritual life of faith to the entrance of a child into natural life. Hence the new birth is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life, when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

III. The necessity of the new birth.

It is necessary to holiness, to eternal salvation, and to present and eternal happiness.

IV. We infer that baptism is not the new birth. The Church Catechism distinguishes the outward and visible sign from the inward and spiritual grace, and the same is evident from the nature of the two; the one outward, the other inward. Nor does the new birth necessarily accompany baptism. This is evident from the fruits which follow. The new birth is distinct from sanctification. Sanctification is a continuous, progressive work; the new birth is instantaneous. The one begins spiritual life; the other is its growth.

Lastly, the baptized sinner must be born again or perish. Whatever may be the grace of infant baptism, it avails nothing to him who is now dead in trespasses and in sin.

SERMON XLV.

THE NEW BIRTH.

"Ye must be born again."—John iii. 7.

1 If any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed "fundamental," they are doubtless these two,—the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth: the former relating to that great work which God does *for us*, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does *in us*, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of *time*, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also "born of the Spirit;" but in order of *thinking*, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts.

2. How great importance then must it be of, to every child of man, thoroughly to understand these fundamental doctrines! From a full conviction of this, many excellent men have wrote very largely concerning justification, explaining every point relating thereto, and opening the scriptures which treat upon it. Many likewise have wrote on the new birth: and some of them largely enough; but yet not so clearly as might have been desired, nor so deeply and accurately; having either given a dark, abstruse account of it, or a slight and superficial one. Therefore a full, and at the same time a clear, account of the new birth seems to be wanting still; such as may enable us to give a satisfactory answer to these three questions: first, Why must we be born again? what is the foundation of this doctrine of the new birth?—secondly, How must we be

born again? what is the nature of the new birth?—and, thirdly, Wherefore must we be born again? to what end is it necessary? These questions, by the assistance of God, I shall briefly and plainly answer; and then subjoin a few inferences which will naturally follow.

I. 1. And, first, Why must we be born again? What is the foundation of this doctrine? The foundation of it lies near as deep as the creation of the world; in the scriptural account whereof we read, "And God," the three-one God, "said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him:" (Gen. i. 26, 27:)—not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of his own immortality; a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections;—nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having "dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth;"—but chiefly in his *moral image;* which, according to the apostle, is "righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 24.) In this image of God was man made. "God is love:" accordingly, man at his creation was full of love; which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth: so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity: and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot; otherwise God could not have pronounced him, as well as all the other works of his hands, "very good." (Gen. i. 31.) This he could not have been, had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness For there is no medium: if we suppose an intelligen creature not to love God, not to be righteous and holy, we necessarily suppose him not to be good at all; much less to be "very good."

2. But, although man was made in the image of God, yet he was not made immutable. This would have been inconsistent with that state of trial in which God was pleased to place him. He was therefore created

able to stand, and yet liable to fall. And this God himself apprized him of, and gave him a solemn warning against it. Nevertheless, man did not abide in honour; he fell from his high estate. He "ate of the tree whereof the Lord had commanded him, Thou shalt not eat thereof." By this wilful act of disobedience to his Creator, this flat rebellion against his Sovereign, he openly declared that he would no longer have God to rule over him; that he would be governed by his own will, and not the will of Him that created him; and that he would not seek his happiness in God, but in the world, in the works of his hands. Now, God had told him before, "In the day that thou eatest" of that fruit, "thou shalt surely die." And the word of the Lord cannot be broken. Accordingly, in that day he did die: he died to God,—the most dreadful of all deaths. He lost the life of God: he was separated from him, in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. The body dies when it is separated from the soul; the soul, when it is separated from God. But this separation from God, Adam sustained in the day, the hour, he ate of the forbidden fruit. And of this he gave immediate proof; presently showing by his behaviour, that the love of God was extinguished in his soul, which was now "alienated from the life of God." Instead of this, he was now under the power of servile fear, so that he fled from the presence of the Lord. Yea, so little did he retain even of the knowledge of Him who filleth heaven and earth, that he endeavoured to "hide himself from the Lord God among the trees of the garden:" (Gen. iii. 8:) so had he lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God could not subsist. Of this, therefore, he was deprived at the same time, and became unholy as well as unhappy. In the room of this, he had sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil; and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts that perish.

3. If it be said, "Nay, but that threatening, 'In the

day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' refers to temporal death, and that alone, to the death of the body only;" the answer is plain: To affirm this is flatly and palpably to make God a liar; to aver that the God of truth positively affirmed a thing contrary to truth. For it is evident, Adam did not *die* in this sense, "in the day that he ate thereof." He lived, in the sense opposite to this death, above nine hundred years after. So that this cannot possibly be understood of the death of the body, without impeaching the veracity of God. It must therefore be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God.

4. And in Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin; entirely void of the life of God; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Instead of this, every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will; the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This, then, is the foundation of the new birth,—the entire corruption of our nature. Hence it is, that, being born in sin, we must be "born again." Hence every one that is born of a woman must be born of the Spirit of God.

II. 1. But how must a man be born again? What is the nature of the new birth? This is the second question. And a question it is of the highest moment that can be conceived. We ought not, therefore, in so weighty a concern, to be content with a slight inquiry; but to examine it with all possible care, and to ponder it in our hearts, till we fully understand this important point, and clearly see how we are to be born again.

2. Not that we are to expect any minute, philosophical account of the manner how this is done. Our Lord sufficiently guards us against any such expectation, by

the words immediately following the text; wherein he reminds Nicodemus of as indisputable a fact as any in the whole compass of nature, which, notwithstanding, the wisest man under the sun is not able fully to explain. "The wind bloweth where it listeth,"—not by thy power or wisdom; "and thou hearest the sound thereof;"—thou art absolutely assured, beyond all doubt, that it doth blow; "but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth;"—the precise manner how it begins and ends, rises and falls, no man can tell. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit;"—thou mayest be as absolutely assured of the fact, as of the blowing of the wind; but the precise manner how it is done, how the Holy Spirit works this in the soul, neither thou nor the wisest of the children of men is able to explain

3. However, it suffices for every rational and Christian purpose, that, without descending into curious, critical inquiries, we can give a plain scriptural account of the nature of the new birth. This will satisfy every reasonable man, who desires only the salvation of his soul. The expression, "being born again," was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus: it was well known before that time, and was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. This expression, therefore, which Nicodemus, being "a teacher in Israel," ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to. And this might be the reason of his asking, "How can these things be?" They cannot be literally:—a man cannot "enter a second time into his

mother's womb, and be born:"—but they may, spiritually: a man may be born from above, born of God, born of the Spirit, in a manner which bears a very near analogy to the natural birth.

4. Before a child is born into the world he has eyes, but sees not; he has ears, but does not hear. He has a very imperfect use of every other sense. He has no knowledge of any of the things of the world, or any natural understanding. To that manner of existence which he then has, we do not even give the name of life. It is then only when a man is born, that we say he begins to live. For as soon as he is born, he begins to see the light, and the various objects with which he is encompassed. His ears are then opened, and he hears the sounds which successively strike upon them. At the same time, all the other organs of sense begin to be exercised upon their proper objects. He likewise breathes, and lives in a manner wholly different from what he did before. How exactly doth the parallel hold in all these instances! While a man is in a mere natural state, before he is born of God, he has, in a spiritual sense, eyes, and sees not; a thick impenetrable veil lies upon them: he has ears, but hears not; he is utterly deaf to what he is most of all concerned to hear. His other spiritual senses are all locked up: he is in the same condition as if he had them not. Hence he has no knowledge of God; no intercourse with him; he is not at all acquainted with him. He has no true knowledge of the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things; therefore, though he is a living man, he is a dead Christian. But as soon as he is born of God, there is a total change in all these particulars. The "eyes of his understanding are opened;" (such is the language of the great apostle;) and He who of old "commanded light to shine out of darkness, shining on his heart, he sees the light of the glory of God," his glorious love, "in the face of Jesus Christ." His ears being opened, he is now capable of hearing the inward voice of God saying, "Be of good cheer; thy

sins are forgiven thee;" "Go, and sin no more." This is the purport of what God speaks to his heart; although perhaps not in these very words. He is now ready to hear whatsoever "He that teacheth man knowledge" is pleased from time to time, to reveal to him. He "feels in his heart," to use the language of our church, "the mighty working of the Spirit of God;" not in a gross, carnal sense, as the men of the world stupidly and wilfully misunderstand the expression; though they have been told again and again, we mean thereby neither more nor less than this: He feels, is inwardly sensible of, the graces which the Spirit of God works in his heart He feels, he is conscious of, "a peace which passeth all understanding." He many times feels such a joy in God as is "unspeakable, and full of glory." He feels "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him;" and all his spiritual senses are then exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. By the use of these, he is daily increasing in the knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and of all the things pertaining to his inward kingdom. And now he may be properly said to live: God having quickened him by his Spirit, he is alive to God through Jesus Christ. He lives a life which the world knoweth not of, a "life which is hid with Christ in God." God is continually breathing, as it were, upon the soul; and his soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into his heart; and prayer and praise ascending to heaven: and by this intercourse between God and man, this fellowship with the Father and the Son, as by a kind of spiritual respiration, the life of God in the soul is sustained; and the child of God grows up, till he comes to the "full measure of the stature of Christ."

5. From hence it manifestly appears, what is the nature of the new birth. It is that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life, when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the

whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is "created anew in Christ Jesus;" when it is "renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness;" when the love of the world is changed into the love of God; pride into humility; passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the "mind which was in Christ Jesus." This is the nature of the new birth: "so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

III. 1. It is not difficult for any who has considered these things to see the necessity of the new birth, and to answer the third question, Wherefore, to what end, is it necessary that we should be born again? It is very easily discerned, that this is necessary, first, in order to holiness. For what is holiness according to the oracles of God? Not a bare external religion, a round of outward duties, how many soever they be, and how exactly soever performed. No: gospel holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart; it is no other than the whole mind which was in Christ Jesus; it consists of all heavenly affections and tempers mingled together in one. It implies such a continual, thankful love to Him who hath not withheld from us his Son, his only Son, as makes it natural, and in a manner necessary to us, to love every child of man; as fills us "with bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering." It is such a love of God as teaches us to be blameless in all manner of conversation; as enables us to present our souls and bodies, all we are and all we have, all our thoughts, words, and actions, a continual sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ Jesus. Now, this holiness can have no existence till we are renewed in the image of our mind. It cannot commence in the soul till that change be wrought; till, by the power of the Highest overshadowing us, we are "brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God;" that is, till we are born again;

which therefore, is absolutely necessary in order to holiness.

2. But "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," shall see the face of God in glory. Of consequence, the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to eternal salvation. Men may indeed flatter themselves, (so desperately wicked and so deceitful is the heart of man!) that they may live in their sins, till they come to the last gasp, and yet afterwards live with God; and thousands do really believe, that they have found a broad way which leadeth not to destruction. "What danger," say they, "can a woman be in that is so *harmless* and so *virtuous?* What fear is there that so *honest* a man, one of so strict *morality*, should miss of heaven; especially, if, over and above all this, they constantly attend on church and sacrament?" One of these will ask with all assurance, "What! shall not I do as well as my neighbours?" Yes, as well as your unholy neighbours; as well as your neighbours that die in their sins! For you will all drop into the pit together, into the nethermost hell! You will all lie together in the lake of fire; "the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Then, at length, you will see (but God grant you may see it before!) the necessity of holiness in order to glory; and, consequently, of the new birth, since none can be holy, except he be born again.

3. For the same reason, except he be born again, none can be happy even in this world. For it is not possible, in the nature of things, that a man should be happy who is not holy. Even the poor, ungodly poet could tell us, *Nemo malus felix:* "No wicked man is happy." The reason is plain: all unholy tempers are uneasy tempers: not only malice, hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge, create a present hell in the breast; but even the softer passions, if not kept within due bounds, give a thousand times more pain than pleasure. Even "hope," when "deferred," (and how often must this be the case!) "maketh the heart sick;" and every desire

which is not according to the will of God is liable to "pierce" us "through with many sorrows:" and all those general sources of sin—pride, self-will, and idolatry—are, in the same proportion as they prevail, general sources of misery. Therefore as long as these reign in any soul, happiness has no place there. But they must reign till the bent of our nature is changed, that is, till we are born again; consequently, the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come.

IV. I proposed in the last place to subjoin a few inferences, which naturally follow from the preceding observations.

1. And, first, it follows that baptism is not the new birth: they are not one and the same thing. Many indeed seem to imagine that they are just the same; at least, they speak as if they thought so; but I do not know that this opinion is publicly avowed by any denomination of Christians whatever. Certainly it is not by any within these kingdoms, whether of the established church, or dissenting from it. The judgment of the latter is clearly declared in their large Catechism:* —Q. "What are the parts of a sacrament? A. The parts of a sacrament are two: the one an outward and sensible sign; the other, an inward and spiritual grace, thereby signified.—Q. What is baptism? A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water, to be a sign and seal of regeneration by his Spirit." Here it is manifest, baptism, the sign, is spoken of as distinct from regeneration, the thing signified.

In the Church Catechism likewise, the judgment of our church is declared with the utmost clearness:— Q. "What meanest thou by this word, sacrament? A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.—Q. What is the outward part or form in baptism? A. Water, wherein the person is baptized,

* Q. 163, 165.

in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. —Q. What is the inward part, or thing signified? A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." Nothing, therefore, is plainer, than that, according to the Church of England, baptism is not the new birth.

But indeed the reason of the thing is so clear and evident as not to need any other authority. For what can be more plain, than that the one is an external, the other an internal, work; that the one is a visible, the other an invisible thing, and therefore wholly different from each other?—the one being an act of man, purifying the body; the other a change wrought by God in the soul: so that the former is just as distinguishable from the latter, as the soul from the body, or water from the Holy Ghost.

2. From the preceding reflections we may, secondly, observe, that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism: they do not constantly go together. A man may possibly be "born of water," and yet not be "born of the Spirit." There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak with regard to infants: it is certain our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years. But whatever be the case with infants, it is sure all of riper years who are baptized are not at the same time born again. "The tree is known by its fruits." And hereby it appears too plain to be denied that divers of those who were children of the devil before they were baptized continue the same after baptism; "for the works of their father they do:" they continue servants of sin, without any pretence either to inward or outward holiness.

3. A third inference which we may draw from what has been observed, is, that the new birth is not the same with sanctification. This is indeed taken for granted by many; particularly by an eminent writer, in his late treatise on "The Nature and Grounds of Christian Regeneration." To waive several other weighty objections which might be made to that tract, this is a palpable one: It all along speaks of regeneration as a progressive work, carried on in the soul by slow degrees, from the time of our first turning to God. This is undeniably true of sanctification; but of regeneration, the new birth, it is not true. This is a part of sanctification, not the whole; it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness, begins; and thenceforward we are gradually to "grow up in Him who is our Head." This expression of the apostle admirably illustrates the difference between one and the other, and farther points out the exact analogy there is between natural and spiritual things. A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time: afterward he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner, a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our new birth and our sanctification.

4. One point more we may learn from the preceding observations. But it is a point of so great importance, as may excuse the considering it the more carefully, and prosecuting it at some length. What must one who loves the souls of men, and is grieved that any of them should perish, say to one whom he sees living in Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, or any other wilful sin? What can he say, if the foregoing observations are true, but, "You must be born again?" "No," says a zealous man, "that cannot be; how can you talk so

uncharitably to the man? Has he not been baptized already? He cannot be born again now." Can he not be born again? Do you affirm this? Then he cannot be saved. Though he be as old as Nicodemus was, yet "except he be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Therefore in saying, "He cannot be born again," you in effect deliver him over to damnation. And where lies the uncharitableness now? on my side, or on yours? I say, He may be born again, and so become an heir of salvation. You say, "He cannot be born again:" and if so, he must inevitably perish! So you utterly block up his way to salvation, and send him to hell out of mere charity!

But perhaps the sinner himself, to whom in real charity we say, "You must be born again," has been taught to say, "I defy your new doctrine; I need not be born again: I was born again when I was baptized. What! would you have me deny my baptism?" I answer, first, There is nothing under heaven which can excuse a lie; otherwise I should say to an open sinner, "If you have been baptized, do not own it. For how highly does this aggravate your guilt! How will it increase your damnation! Was you devoted to God at eight days old, and have you been all these years devoting yourself to the devil? Was you, even before you had the use of reason, consecrated to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? and have you, ever since you had the use of it, been flying in the face of God, and consecrating yourself to Satan? Does the abomination of desolation—the love of the world, pride, anger, lust, foolish desire, and a whole train of vile affections—stand where it ought not? Have you set up all these accursed things in that soul which was once a temple of the Holy Ghost; set apart for a 'habitation of God, through the Spirit;' yea, solemnly given up to him? And do you glory in this, that you once belonged to God? Oh, be ashamed! blush! hide yourself in the earth! Never boast more of what ought to fill you with confusion, to make you ashamed before

God and man!" I answer, secondly, You have already denied your baptism; and that in the most effectual manner. You have denied it a thousand and a thousand times; and you do so still, day by day. For in your baptism you renounced the devil and all his works. Whenever, therefore, you give place to him again, whenever you do any of the works of the devil, then you deny your baptism. Therefore you deny it by every wilful sin; by every act of uncleanness, drunkenness, or revenge; by every obscene or profane word; by every oath that comes out of your mouth. Every time you profane the day of the Lord, you thereby deny your baptism; yea, every time you do any thing to another which you would not he should do to you. I answer, thirdly, Be you baptized or unbaptized, "you must be born again;" otherwise it is not possible you should be inwardly holy; and without inward as well as outward holiness, you cannot be happy, even in this world, much less in the world to come. Do you say, "Nay, but I do no harm to any man; I am honest and just in all my dealings: I do not curse, or take the Lord's name in vain; I do not profane the Lord's day; I am no drunkard; I do not slander my neighbour, nor live in any wilful sin?" If this be so, it were much to be wished that all men went as far as you do. But you must go farther yet, or you cannot be saved: still "you must be born again." Do you add, "I do go farther yet; for I not only do no harm, but do all the good I can?" I doubt that fact: I fear you have had a thousand opportunities of doing good which you have suffered to pass by unimproved, and for which therefore you are accountable to God. But if you had improved them all, if you really had done all the good you possibly could to all men, yet this does not at all alter the case; still "you must be born again." Without this nothing will do any good to your poor, sinful, polluted soul. "Nay, but I constantly attend all the ordinances of God: I keep to my church and sacrament" It is well you do: but all this will not keep you from

hell, except you be born again. Go to church twice a day; go to the Lord's table every week; say ever so many prayers in private; hear ever so many good sermons; read ever so many good books; still "you must be born again:" none of these things will stand in the place of the new birth; no, nor any thing under heaven. Let this, therefore, if you have not already experienced this inward work of God, be your continual prayer: "Lord, add this to all thy blessings,—let me be born again! Deny whatever thou pleasest, but deny not this; let me be 'born from above!' Take away whatsoever seemeth thee good,—reputation, fortune, friends, health, —only give me this, to be born of the Spirit, to be received among the children of God! Let me be born, 'not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever;' and then let me daily 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!'"

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLV.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What is said of the doctrine of the new birth?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is important to every child of man?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What is the first question stated?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) What is said of the immutability of man?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) What is said concerning the threatenings as referring to temporal death only?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) What was the result of Adam's sin?

Ques. 7. (II. 1.) What is the second question stated here?

Ques. 8. (II. 2.) Can we give a minute philosophical account of the new birth?

Ques. 9. (II. 3.) What is said to be sufficient for every rational purpose?

Ques. 10. (II. 4.) What analogy is here drawn?

Ques. 11. (II. 5.) What appears from hence? How is the new birth defined?

Ques. 12. (III. 1.) What is the third question here stated?

Ques. 13. (III. 1.) What is the first reason assigned? What is holiness said to be?

Ques. 14. (III. 2.) Why is the new birth absolutely necessary to salvation?

Ques. 15. (III. 3.) What is said to be the consequence, even in this world? What is said of the ungodly poet?

Ques. 16. (IV. 1.) What does he propose to show lastly?

Ques. 17. (IV. 2.) Is baptism the new birth? How does he prove that it is not?

Ques. 18. (IV. 2.) What does he say of the judgment of the Church of England? What consequence does he draw from the quotations made from the Catechism?

Ques. 19. (IV. 2.) Although no writer of that Church may say that baptism and the new birth "are one and the same thing," do not many of them teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration? *Ans.* They do, and maintain that the spiritual grace always attends the outward ordinance. Mr. Wesley affirms that grace does *not* always attend the administration of the ordinance.

Ques. 20. (IV. 2.) What does Mr. Wesley say the Church of England teaches with regard to infants? What does he say of the office of infant baptism?

Ques. 21. (IV. 3.) What is the third inference?

Ques. 22. (IV. 4.) What more may we learn from the preceding observations?

Ques. 23. (IV. 4.) How does he address a baptized sinner?

NOTE.—Previous to 1661 the Church of England had no distinctive office for the baptism of *adults*. This proves the universal practice of infant baptism in the Church before the Reformation.

SERMON XLVI.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

The two sermons at which we now arrive complete Mr. Wesley's doctrine of the inner life. The special doctrines of assurance and of inward holiness and perfect love tended to turn the thoughts of his hearers in upon themselves and to lead them in the direction of mysticism. While there were important truths to be learned in this way, there were also serious errors to be avoided. A little before the publication of this sermon the English mystic, Mr. Law, had published a treatise in which the objective facts of Christianity seemed to be completely obscured, if not replaced, by subjective frames or states of mind. One of his doctrines was that it is better and more profitable for the soul to lose its sense of the love of God than to keep it. To this treatise Mr. Wesley replies at length in a published letter to the author, and his private letters show that such sentiments had been widely disseminated, and that he took great pains to guard his followers against them. It was especially the Antinomian tendency of such a doctrine which Mr. Wesley dreaded. He says in his reply to Law, "It tends to make believers easy while they are sliding back into unbelief," "to obstruct if not destroy the work of God in the heart" "by causing men to imagine they are considerably advanced in grace, when they have grieved—yea, quenched—the Spirit." To one of his correspondents he says, "You look inward too much and upward too little." "Legality with most who use that term really means tenderness of conscience." "I think it highly advisable for Methodists to

lay it quite aside." The present sermon is intended to help those who are in danger of resting in a false comfort in their inward struggles. This he does by leading them to renew the penitent faith by which alone their forfeited peace can be restored.—*Burwash.*

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLVI.

Israel in the wilderness may be taken as a type of certain Christians who are in a diseased spiritual state.

I. The nature of this disease.

It is a loss—(1) of faith, (2) of love, (3) of joy, (4) of peace, (5) of power.

II. The cause of it.

1. Sin. Sometimes presumptuous sins of commission, bringing sudden darkness. More frequently sins of omission, gradually obscuring the light; such as neglect of prayer, neglecting to reprove sin. Inward sin, such as pride, anger, lust. Neglect of diligence and earnestness of spiritual life.

2. Ignorance. Of God's word. Of God's work in the soul, such as the Romish mystics.

3. Temptation; unexpected by the young Christian, especially if we have thought too highly of ourselves.

III. The cure of this darkness.

The cure will vary with the cause.

If it is sin we must search out and put away the sin, questioning conscience for sins of commission, asking if there be any neglect of duty, looking within for sinful tempers, and guarding against spiritual sloth.

If it is ignorance we must understand the true meaning of misread passages of God's word, such as Isaiah i. 10, Hosea iii. 14, John xvi. 22, 1 Peter iv. 12. We must also avoid the mistaken notion that darkness is necessary or profitable.

If it be temptation we must expect temptation, consider the imperfection of our religious state, and hold fast to the promises.

SERMON XLVI.

THE WILDERNESS STATE.

'*Ye now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*"—JOHN xvi. 22.

1. AFTER God had wrought a great deliverance for Israel, by bringing them out of the house of bondage, they did not immediately enter into the land which he had promised to their fathers; but "wandered out of the way in the wilderness," and were variously tempted and distressed. In like manner, after God has delivered them that fear him from the bondage of sin and Satan, after they are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus," yet not many of them immediately enter into "the rest which remaineth for the people of God." The greater part of them wander, more or less, out of the good way into which he hath brought them. They come, as it were, into a "waste and howling desert," where they are variously tempted and tormented: and this, some, in allusion to the case of the Israelites, have termed "a wilderness state."

2. Certain it is, that the condition wherein these are has a right to the tenderest compassion. They labour under an evil and sore disease; though one that is not commonly understood; and for this very reason it is the more difficult for them to find a remedy. Being in darkness themselves, they cannot be supposed to understand the nature of their own disorder; and few of their brethren, nay, perhaps, of their teachers, know either what their sickness is, or how to heal it. So much the more need there is to inquire, first, what is the nature of this disease? secondly, what is the cause? and, thirdly, what is the cure of it?

I. 1. And, first, what is the nature of this disease, into which so many fall after they have believed? Wherein does it properly consist; and what are the genuine symptoms of it? It properly consists in the loss of that faith which God once wrought in their heart. They that are *in the wilderness* have not now that divine "evidence," that satisfactory conviction, "of things not seen," which they once enjoyed. They have not now that inward demonstration of the Spirit which before enabled each of them to say, "The life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." The light of heaven does not now "shine in their hearts," neither do they "see Him that is invisible;" but darkness is again on the face of their souls, and blindness on the eyes of their understanding. The Spirit no longer "witnesses with their spirits, that they are the children of God;" neither does he continue as the Spirit of adoption, "crying" in their hearts, "Abba, Father." They have not now a sure trust in his love, and a liberty of approaching him with holy boldness. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is no more the language of their heart; but they are shorn of their strength, and become weak and feeble-minded, even as other men.

2. Hence, secondly, proceeds the loss of love; which cannot but rise or fall, at the same time, and in the same proportion, with true, living faith. Accordingly, they that are deprived of their faith are deprived of the love of God also. They cannot now say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." They are not now happy in God, as every one is that truly loves him. They do not delight in him as in time past, and "smell the odour of his ointments." Once, all their "desire was unto him, and to the remembrance of his name;" but now even their desires are cold and dead, if not utterly extinguished. And as their love of God is waxed cold, so is also their love of their neighbour. They have not now that zeal for the souls of men, that longing after their welfare, that fervent, rest-

less, active desire of their being reconciled to God. They do not feel those "bowels of mercies" for the sheep that are lost,—that tender "compassion for the ignorant, and them that are out of the way." Once they were "gentle toward all men," meekly instructing such as opposed the truth; and, "if any was overtaken in a fault, restoring such a one in the spirit of meekness:" but, after a suspense, perhaps of many days, anger begins to regain its power; yea, peevishness and impatience thrust sore at them that they may fall; and it is well if they are not sometimes driven even to "render evil for evil, and railing for railing."

3. In consequence of the loss of faith and love, follows, thirdly, loss of joy in the Holy Ghost. For if the loving consciousness of pardon be no more, the joy resulting therefrom cannot remain. If the Spirit does not witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, the joy that flowed from the inward witness must also be at an end. And, in like manner, they who once "rejoiced with joy unspeakable," "in hope of the glory of God," now they are deprived of that "hope full of immortality," are deprived of the joy it occasioned; as also of that which resulted from a consciousness of "the love of God," then "shed abroad in their hearts." For the cause being removed, so is the effect; the fountain being dammed up, those living waters spring no more to refresh the thirsty soul.

4. With loss of faith, and love, and joy, there is also joined, fourthly, the loss of that "peace which" once passed "all understanding." That sweet tranquillity of mind, that composure of spirit, is gone. Painful doubt returns; doubt, whether we ever did, and perhaps whether we ever shall, believe. We begin to doubt whether we ever did find in our hearts the real testimony of the Spirit; whether we did not rather deceive our own souls, and mistake the voice of nature for the voice of God; nay, and perhaps, whether we shall ever hear his voice, and find favour in his sight. And these doubts are again joined with servile fear, with that fear which

hath torment. We fear the wrath of God, even as before we believed: we fear, lest we should be cast out of his presence; and thence sink again into that fear of death, from which we were before wholly delivered.

5. But even this is not all; for loss of peace is accompanied with loss of power. We know every one who has peace with God, through Jesus Christ, has power over all sin. But whenever he loses the peace of God, he loses also the power over sin. While that peace remained, power also remained, even over the besetting sin, whether it were the sin of his nature, of his constitution, of his education, or his profession; yea, and over those evil tempers and desires which, till then, he could not conquer. Sin had then no more dominion over him; but he hath now no more dominion over sin. He may struggle, indeed, but he cannot overcome; the crown is fallen from his head. His enemies again prevail over him, and, more or less, bring him into bondage. The glory is departed from him, even the kingdom of God which was in his heart. He is dispossessed of righteousness, as well as of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. 1. Such is the nature of what many have termed, and not improperly, "the wilderness state." But the nature of it may be more fully understood by inquiring, secondly, What are the causes of it? These, indeed, are various. But I dare not rank among these the bare, arbitrary, sovereign will of God. He "rejoiceth in the prosperity of his servants: he delighteth not to afflict or grieve the children of men." His invariable will is our sanctification, attended with "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." These are his own free gifts; and we are assured "the gifts of God are," on his part, "without repentance." He never repenteth of what he hath given, or desires to withdraw them from us. Therefore he never *deserts* us, as some speak: it is we only that *desert* him.

(I.) 2. The most usual cause of inward darkness is

sin, of one kind or another. This it is which generally occasions what is often a complication of sin and misery. And, first, sin of commission. This may frequently be observed to darken the soul in a moment; especially if it be a known, a wilful, or presumptuous sin. If, for instance, a person who is now walking in the clear light of God's countenance should be in any way prevailed on to commit a single act of drunkenness, or uncleanness, it would be no wonder if in that very hour he fell into utter darkness. It is true, there have been some very rare cases, wherein God has prevented this, by an extraordinary display of his pardoning mercy, almost in the very instant. But, in general, such an abuse of the goodness of God, so gross an insult on his love, occasions an immediate estrangement from God, and a "darkness that may be felt."

3. But it may be hoped this case is not very frequent; that there are not many who so despise the riches of his goodness as, while they walk in his light, so grossly and presumptuously to rebel against him. That light is much more frequently lost by giving way to sins of omission. This, indeed, does not immediately quench the Spirit, but gradually and slowly. The former may be compared to pouring water upon a fire; the latter, to withdrawing the fuel from it. And many times will that loving Spirit reprove our neglect, before he departs from us. Many are the inward checks, the secret notices, he gives, before his influences are withdrawn. So that only a train of omissions, wilfully persisted in, can bring us into utter darkness.

4. Perhaps no sin of omission more frequently occasions this than the neglect of private prayer; the want whereof cannot be supplied by any other ordinance whatever. Nothing can be more plain, than that the life of God in the soul does not continue, much less increase, unless we use all opportunities of communion with God, and pouring out our hearts before him. If, therefore, we are negligent of this, if we suffer business, company, or any avocation whatever, to prevent these

secret exercises of the soul, (or, which comes to the same thing, to make us hurry them over in a slight and careless manner,) that life will surely decay. And if we long or frequently intermit them, it will gradually die away.

5. Another sin of omission, which frequently brings the soul of a believer into darkness, is the neglect of what was so strongly enjoined, even under the Jewish dispensation: "Thou shalt, in anywise, rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him: thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart." Now, if we do hate our brother in our heart, if we do not rebuke him when we see him in a fault, but suffer sin upon him, this will soon bring leanness into our own soul; seeing hereby we are partakers of his sin. By neglecting to reprove our neighbour, we make his sin our own: we become accountable for it to God: we saw his danger, and gave him no warning: so, "if he perish in his iniquity," God may justly require "his blood at our hand." No wonder then, if by thus grieving the Spirit, we lose the light of his countenance.

6. A third cause of our losing this is, the giving way to some kind of inward sin. For example: we know, every one that is "proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord;" and that, although this pride of heart should not appear in the outward conversation. Now, how easily may a soul filled with peace and joy fall into this snare of the devil! How natural is it for him to imagine that he has more grace, more wisdom or strength, than he really has! "to think more highly of himself than he ought to think!" How natural to glory in something he has received, as if he had not received it! But seeing God continually "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace" only "to the humble," this must certainly obscure, if not wholly destroy, the light which before shone on his heart.

7. The same effect may be produced by giving place to anger, whatever the provocation or occasion be; yea, though it were coloured over with the name of "zeal

for the truth," or "for the glory of God." Indeed, all zeal which is any other than the flame of love is "earthly, animal, and devilish." It is the flame of wrath: it is flat, sinful anger, neither better nor worse. And nothing is a greater enemy to the mild, gentle love of God than this: they never did, they never can, subsist together in one breast. In the same proportion as this prevails, love and joy in the Holy Ghost decrease. This is particularly observable in the case of *offence:* I mean, anger at any of our brethren, at any of those who are united with us either by civil or religious ties. If we give way to the spirit of offence but one hour, we lose the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit; so that, instead of amending them, we destroy ourselves, and become an easy prey to any enemy that assaults us.

8. But suppose we are aware of this snare of the devil, we may be attacked from another quarter. When fierceness and anger are asleep, and love alone is waking, we may be no less endangered by desire, which equally tends to darken the soul. This is the sure effect of any foolish desire, any vain or inordinate affection. If we set our affections on things of the earth, on any person or thing under the sun; if we desire any thing but God, and what tends to God; if we seek happiness in any creature; the jealous God will surely contend with us, for he can admit of no rival. And if we will not hear his warning voice, and return unto him with our whole soul, if we continue to grieve him with our idols, and running after other gods, we shall soon be cold, barren, and dry; and the god of this world will blind and darken our hearts.

9. But this he frequently does, even when we do not give way to any positive sin. It is enough, it gives him sufficient advantage, if we do not "stir up the gift of God which is in us;" if we do not agonize continually "to enter in at the strait gate;" if we do not earnestly "strive for the mastery," and "take the kingdom of heaven by violence." There needs no more than

not to fight, and we are sure to be conquered. Let us only be careless or "faint in our mind," let us be easy and indolent, and our natural darkness will soon return, and overspread our soul. It is enough, therefore, if we give way to spiritual sloth; this will effectually darken the soul: it will as surely destroy the light of God, if not so swiftly, as murder or adultery.

10. But it is well to be observed, that the cause of our darkness (whatsoever it be, whether omission or commission, whether inward or outward sin) is not always nigh at hand. Sometimes the sin which occasioned the present distress may lie at a considerable distance. It might be committed days, or weeks, or months before. And that God now withdraws his light and peace on account of what was done so long ago, is not (as one might at first imagine) an instance of his severity, but rather a proof of his long-suffering and tender mercy. He waited all this time, if haply we would see, acknowledge, and correct what was amiss; and, in default of this, he at length shows his displeasure, if thus, at last, he may bring us to repentance.

(II.) 1. Another general cause of this darkness is *ignorance;* which is likewise of various kinds. If men know not the Scriptures, if they imagine there are passages either in the Old or New Testament which assert, that all believers, without exception, *must* sometimes be in darkness; this ignorance will naturally bring upon them the darkness which they expect. And how common a case has this been among us! How few are there that do not expect it! And no wonder, seeing they are taught to expect it; seeing their guides lead them into this way. Not only the mystic writers of the Romish Church, but many of the most spiritual and experimental in our own, (very few of the last century excepted,) lay it down with all assurance, as a plain, unquestionable scripture doctrine, and cite many texts to prove it.

2. Ignorance also of the work of God in the soul frequently occasions this darkness. Men imagine (because so they have been taught, particularly by writers of the Romish communion, whose plausible assertions too many Protestants have received without due examination) that they are not always to walk in *luminous faith;* that this is only a *lower dispensation;* that as they rise higher, they are to leave those *sensible comforts,* and to live by *naked faith;* (*naked*, indeed, if it be stripped both of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!) that a state of light and joy is good, but a state of darkness and dryness is better; that it is by these alone we can be purified from pride, love of the world, and inordinate self-love; and that, therefore, we ought neither to expect nor desire to walk in the light always. Hence it is, (though other reasons may concur,) that the main body of pious men in the Romish Church generally walk in a dark uncomfortable way, and, if ever they receive, soon lose, the light of God.

(III.) 1. A third general cause of this darkness is *temptation.* When the candle of the Lord first shines on our head, temptation frequently flees away, and totally disappears. All is calm within, perhaps without too, while God makes our enemies to be at peace with us. It is then very natural to suppose that we shall not see war any more. And there are instances wherein this calm has continued, not only for weeks, but for months or years. But commonly it is otherwise: in a short time "the winds blow, the rains descend, and the floods arise" anew. They who know not either the Son or the Father, and consequently hate his children, when God slackens the bridle which is in their teeth, will show that hatred in various instances. As of old, "he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now;" the same cause still producing the same effect. The evil which yet remains in the heart will then also move afresh; anger, and many other roots of bitterness, will endeavour to spring up. At the same time, Satan will not be want

ing to cast in his fiery darts; and the soul will have to wrestle, not only with the world, not only "with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with wicked spirits in high places." Now, when so various assaults are made at once, and perhaps with the utmost violence, it is not strange if it should occasion, not only heaviness, but even darkness in a weak believer—more especially, if he was not watching; if these assaults are made in an hour when he looked not for them; if he expected nothing less, but had fondly told himself,—the day of evil would return no more.

2. The force of those temptations which arise from within will be exceedingly heightened if we before thought too highly of ourselves, as if we had been cleansed from all sin. And how naturally do we imagine this during the warmth of our first love! How ready are we to believe that God has "fulfilled in us the" whole "work of faith with power!" that because we *feel* no sin, we *have* none in us; but the soul is all love! And well may a sharp attack from an enemy, whom we suppose to be not only conquered but slain, throw us into much heaviness of soul; yea, sometimes, into utter darkness: particularly when we *reason* with this enemy, instead of instantly calling upon God, and, casting ourselves upon Him, by simple faith, who "alone knoweth how to deliver" his "out of temptation."

III. These are the usual causes of this second darkness. Inquire we, thirdly, what is the cure of it?

1. To suppose that this is one and the same in all cases, is a great and fatal mistake; and yet extremely common, even among many who pass for experienced Christians, yea, perhaps, take upon them to be teachers in Israel, to be the guides of other souls. Accordingly, they know and use but one medicine, whatever be the cause of the distemper. They begin immediately to apply the promises; to *preach the gospel*, as they call it. To give comfort, is the single point at which they

aim; in order to which they say many soft and tender things, concerning the love of God to poor, helpless sinners, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Now this is *quackery* indeed, and that of the worst sort, as it tends, if not to kill men's bodies, yet, without the peculiar mercy of God, "to destroy both their bodies and souls in hell." It is hard to speak of these "daubers with untempered mortar," these promise-mongers, as they deserve. They well deserve the title, which has been ignorantly given to others: they are *spiritual mountebanks.* They do, in effect, make "the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." They vilely prostitute the promises of God, by thus applying them to all without distinction. Whereas, indeed, the cure of spiritual, as of bodily diseases, must be as various as are the causes of them. The first thing, therefore, is, to find out the cause; and this will naturally point out the cure.

2. For instance: Is it sin which occasions darkness? What sin? Is it outward sin of any kind? Does your conscience accuse you of committing any sin, whereby you grieve the Holy Spirit of God? Is it on this account that he is departed from you, and that joy and peace are departed with him? And how can you expect they should return, till you put away the accursed thing? "Let the wicked forsake his way;" "cleanse your hands, ye sinners;" "put away the evil of your doings;" so shall your "light break out of obscurity;" the Lord will return and "abundantly pardon."

3. If, upon the closest search, you can find no sin of commission which causes the cloud upon your soul, inquire next, if there be not some sin of omission which separates between God and you. Do you "not suffer sin upon your brother?" Do you reprove them that sin in your sight? Do you walk in all the ordinances of God? in public, family, private prayer? If not, if you habitually neglect any one of these known duties, how can you expect that the light of his countenance should continue to shine upon you? Make haste to

"strengthen the things that remain;" then your soul shall live. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice," by his grace supply what is lacking. When you hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the way, walk thou in it," harden not your heart; be no more "disobedient to the heavenly calling." Till the sin, whether of omission or commission, be removed, all comfort is false and deceitful. It is only skinning the wound over, which still festers and rankles beneath. Look for no peace within, till you are at peace with God; which cannot be without "fruits meet for repentance."

4. But perhaps you are not conscious of even any sin of omission which impairs your peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Is there not, then, some inward sin, which, as a root of bitterness, springs up in your heart to trouble you? Is not your dryness and barrenness of soul occasioned by your heart's "departing from the living God?" Has not "the foot of pride come against" you? Have you not thought of yourself "more highly than you ought to think?" Have you not, in any respect, "sacrificed to your own net, and burned incense to your own drag?" Have you not ascribed your success in any undertaking to your own courage, or strength, or wisdom? Have you not boasted of something "you have received, as though you had not received it?" Have you not gloried in any thing "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Have you not sought after or desired the praise of men? Have you not taken pleasure in it? If so, you see the way you are to take. If you have fallen by pride, "humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and he will exalt you in due time." Have not you forced him to depart from you, by giving place to anger? Have not you "fretted yourself because of the ungodly?" or "been envious against the evil-doers?" Have you not been offended at any of your brethren, looking at their (real or imagined) sin, so as to sin yourself against the great law of love, by estranging your heart from them? Then look unto the Lord, that you may renew your

strength; that all this sharpness and coldness may be done away; that love, and peace, and joy may return together, and you may be invariably kind to each other, and "tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Have not you given way to any foolish desire? to any kind or degree of inordinate affection? How then can the love of God have place in your heart, till you put away your idols? "Be not deceived: God is not mocked:" he will not dwell in a divided heart. As long, therefore, as you cherish Delilah in your bosom, he has no place there. It is vain to hope for a recovery of his light, till you pluck out the right eye, and cast it from you. Oh, let there be no longer delay! Cry to Him, that he may enable you so to do! Bewail your own impotence and helplessness; and, the Lord being your helper, enter in at the strait gate: take the kingdom of heaven by violence! Cast out every idol from his sanctuary, and the glory of the Lord shall soon appear.

5. Perhaps it is this very thing, the want of striving, spiritual sloth, which keeps your soul in darkness. You dwell at ease in the land; there is no war in your coasts; and so you are quiet and unconcerned. You go on in the same even track of outward duties, and are content there to abide. And do you wonder, meantime, that your soul is dead? Oh, stir yourself up before the Lord! Arise, and shake yourself from the dust; wrestle with God for the mighty blessing; pour out your soul unto God in prayer, and continue therein with all perseverance! Watch! Awake out of sleep; and keep awake!—otherwise there is nothing to be expected, but that you will be alienated more and more from the light and life of God.

6. If, upon the fullest and most impartial examination of yourself, you cannot discern that you at present give way either to spiritual sloth, or any other inward or outward sin, then call to mind the time that is past. Consider your former tempers, words, and actions.

Have these been right before the Lord? "Commune with him in your chamber, and be still;" and desire of him to try the ground of your heart, and bring to your remembrance whatever has at any time offended the eyes of his glory. If the guilt of any unrepented sin remain on your soul, it cannot be but you will remain in darkness, till, having been renewed by repentance, you are again washed by faith in "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness."

7. Entirely different will be the manner of the cure, if the cause of the disease be not sin, but ignorance. It may be ignorance of the meaning of Scripture; perhaps occasioned by ignorant commentators; ignorant, at least, in this respect, however knowing and learned they may be in other particulars. And in this case, that ignorance must be removed before we can remove the darkness arising from it. We must show the true meaning of those texts which have been misunderstood. My design does not permit me to consider all the passages of Scripture which have been pressed into this service. I shall just mention two or three, which are frequently brought to prove, that all believers must, sooner or later, "walk in darkness."

8. One of these is Isaiah l. 10: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." But how does it appear, either from the text or context, that the person here spoken of ever had light? One who is convinced of sin "feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant." And him we should advise, though he was still dark of soul, and had never seen the light of God's countenance, yet to "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." This text, therefore, proves nothing less than that a believer in Christ "must sometimes *walk in darkness.*"

9. Another text which has been supposed to speak the same doctrine is Hosea ii. 14: "I will allure her,

and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" Hence it has been inferred, that God will bring every believer *into the wilderness*, into a state of deadness and darkness. But it is certain, the text speaks no such thing; for it does not appear that it speaks of particular believers at all: it manifestly refers to the Jewish nation; and, perhaps, to that only. But if be applicable to particular persons, the plain meaning of it is this:—I will draw him by love: I will next convince him of sin; and then comfort him by my pardoning mercy.

10. A third scripture, from whence the same inference has been drawn, is that above recited. "Ye now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." This has been supposed to imply, that God would, after a time, withdraw himself from all believers; and that they could not, till after they had thus sorrowed, have the joy which no man could take from them. But the whole context shows, that our Lord is here speaking personally to the apostles, and no others; and that he is speaking concerning those particular events, his own death and resurrection. "A little while," says he, "and ye shall not see me;" namely, whilst I am in the grave: "and again, a little while, and ye shall see me;" when I am risen from the dead. "Ye will weep and lament, and the world will rejoice: but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—"Ye now have sorrow," because I am about to be taken from your head; "but I will see you again," after my resurrection, "and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy," which I will then give you, "no man taketh from you." All this we know was literally fulfilled in the particular case of the apostles. But no inference can be drawn from hence with regard to God's dealings with believers in general.

11. A fourth text, (to mention no more,) which has been frequently cited in proof of the same doctrine, is 1 Pet. iv 12: "Beloved, think it not strange concern-

ing the fiery trial which is to try you." But this is full as foreign to the point as the preceding. The text, literally rendered, runs thus: "Beloved, wonder not at the burning which is among you, which is for your trial." Now, however this may be accommodated to inward trials, in a secondary sense; yet, primarily, it doubtless refers to martyrdom, and the sufferings connected with it. Neither, therefore, is this text any thing at all to the purpose for which it is cited. And we may challenge all men to bring one text, either from the Old or New Testament, which is any more to the purpose than this.

12. "But is not darkness much more profitable for the soul than light? Is not the work of God in the heart more swiftly and effectually carried on during a state of inward suffering? Is not a believer more swiftly and throughly purified by sorrow than by joy?—by anguish, and pain, and distress, and spiritual martyrdoms, than by continual peace?" So the Mystics teach; so it is written in their books; but not in the oracles of God. The Scripture nowhere says, that the absence of God best perfects his work in the heart! Rather, his presence, and a clear communion with the Father and the Son: a strong consciousness of this will do more in an hour, that his absence in an age. Joy in the Holy Ghost will far more effectually purify the soul than the want of that joy; and the peace of God is the best means of refining the soul from the dross of earthly affections. Away then with the idle conceit, that the kingdom of God is divided against itself; that the peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are obstructive of righteousness; and that we are saved, not by faith, but by unbelief; not by hope, but by despair!

13. So long as men dream thus, they may well "walk in darkness:" nor can the effect cease till the cause is removed. But yet we must not imagine it will immediately cease, even when the cause is no

more When either ignorance or sin has caused darkness, one or the other may be removed, and yet the light which was obstructed thereby may not immediately return. As it is the free gift of God, he may restore it, sooner or later, as it pleases him. In the case of sin, we cannot reasonably expect that it should immediately return. The sin began before the punishment, which may, therefore, justly remain after the sin is at an end. And even in the natural course of things, though a wound cannot be healed while the dart is sticking in the flesh; yet neither is it healed as soon as that is drawn out, but soreness and pain may remain long after.

14. Lastly. If darkness be occasioned by manifold and heavy and unexpected temptations, the best way of removing and preventing this is, to teach believers always to expect temptation, seeing they dwell in an evil world, among wicked, subtile, malicious spirits, and have a heart capable of all evil. Convince them that the whole work of sanctification is not, as they imagined, wrought at once; that when they first believe they are but as newborn babes, who are gradually to grow up, and may expect many storms before they come to the full stature of Christ. Above all, let them be instructed, when the storm is upon them, not to reason with the devil, but to pray; to pour out their souls before God, and show him of their trouble. And these are the persons unto whom, chiefly, we are to apply the great and precious promises; not to the ignorant till the ignorance is removed, much less to the impenitent sinner. To these we may largely and affectionately declare the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, and expatiate upon his tender mercies which have been ever of old. Here we may dwell upon the faithfulness of God, whose "word is tried to the utter most;" and upon the virtue of that blood which was shed for us, to "cleanse us from all sin:" and God will then bear witness to his word, and bring their souls

out of trouble. He will say, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Yea, and that light, if thou walk humbly and closely with God, will "shine more and more unto the perfect day."

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLVI.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What illustration is taken from the deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said to be worthy of compassion?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What is the first inquiry here made?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) What is said, secondly, to be lost?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) What follows this loss of love?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) What is joined to the loss of love, faith, and joy?

Ques. 7. (I. 5.) What accompanies the loss of peace?

Ques. 8. (II. 1.) What is this state called?

Ques. 9. (II. 2.) What is the cause of inward darkness?

Ques. 10. (II. 3.) What is said of the frequency of this case?

Ques. 11. (II. 4.) What sin of omission most frequently causes it?

Ques. 12. (II. 5.) What other sin of omission is mentioned?

Ques. 13. (II. 6.) What is the third cause mentioned?

Ques. 14. (II. 7.) How may the same effect be produced?

Ques. 15. (II. 8.) From what other quarter may we be attacked?

Ques. 16. (II. 9.) What gives Satan sufficient advantage, even when no positive sin is committed?

Ques. 17. (II. 10.) What is it well to observe?

Ques. 18. (II. 11.) What is another cause of darkness?

Ques. 19. (II. 12.) What other cause is assigned?

Ques. 20. (III. 1.) What is a third cause?

Ques. 21. (III. 2.) How will the force of temptations be heightened?

Ques. 22. (III. 1.) What is it a mistake to suppose?

Ques. 23. (III. 2.) What instances are here made subjects of inquiry?

Ques. 24. (III. 3.) If no sin of commission is found, what then?

Ques. 25. (III. 4.) What is said of inward sin?

Ques. 26. (III. 5.) What is said of the want of striving?

Ques. 27. (III. 6.) What course is here recommended?

Ques. 28. (III. 7.) What is the cure if ignorance is the cause?

Ques. 29. (III. 8.) What is the first passage quoted?

Ques. 30. (III. 9.) What is the second?

Ques. 31. (III. 10.) What is the third?

Ques. 32. (III. 11.) What is the fourth?

Ques. 33. (III. 12.) What objection is here stated?

Ques. 34. (III. 13.) What follows when men dream thus?

Ques. 35. (III. 14.) What course is here pointed out?

Ques. 36. (III. 14.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLVII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In the preceding discourse Mr. Wesley has furnished us with necessary help for self-examination. But whilst self-inquiry is essential to the due progress of the soul, it is possible to carry this process too far. As long as there is a consciousness of a decline in the state of religion in the soul the cause should be diligently sought for, and, if necessary, we should search narrowly and thoroughly in every corner of the heart, that we may discover the cause of spiritual deadness.

But there is a limit to self-examination. When there is no lack of sensitiveness, and plain evidence exists of a deep and serious desire to do the will of God, there may be a state of heaviness which is here distinguished from the state of spiritual darkness. This disquietude may arise from a variety of causes. The student will do well to examine Mr. Wesley's argument with great care. Ministers have often to deal with souls that are cast down under the weight of manifold temptations. Certain states of bodily health are productive of this spiritual heaviness. It does not follow that either sins of commission or sins of omission have caused this depressed state of mind. The effect of a great sorrow, a domestic affliction, the loss of property, the burdens of care occasioned by the responsibilities of life—these and many other causes may produce the condition described in this discourse.

To deal wisely and prudently with all classes of believers, giving to each his meat in due season, is the duty of the

minister. To do this, he must understand thoroughly the occasion and the remedy. "He that winneth souls is wise."

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLVII.

Resemblance between darkness and heaviness, but still wide and essential difference.

I. The kind of persons who were in heaviness.

They had living faith, peace, hope, and joy. They had conscious love to God, and maintained their holiness.

II. The nature of their heaviness. Grief severe and long continued.

III. The causes of this heaviness.

Temptations, many in number and in kind; such as bodily disorders, poverty, the loss of dear friends, the sin of those who are dear to us. But not the arbitrary will of God withdrawing the comforts of his Spirit. Nor necessarily that knowledge of ourselves by which we are prepared for higher attainments.

IV. The ends of this heaviness.

The trial, and thereby the increase of our faith; the glory of God and the advantage of others by our example.

V. Lessons.

SERMON XLVII.

HEAVINESS THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS.

"Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."—1 PET. i. 6.

IN the preceding discourse, I have particularly spoken of that darkness of mind into which those are often observed to fall who once walked in the light of God's countenance. Nearly related to this is the heaviness of soul which is still more common, even among believers. Indeed, almost all the children of God experience this, in a higher or lower degree. And so great is the resemblance between one and the other, that they are frequently confounded together; and we are apt to say indifferently, "Such a one is in darkness," or, "Such a one is in heaviness;"—as if they were equivalent terms, one of which implied no more than the other. But they are far, very far, from it. Darkness is one thing; heaviness is another. There is a difference, yea, a wide and essential difference, between the former and the latter. And such a difference it is as all the children of God are deeply concerned to understand; otherwise, nothing will be more easy than for them to slide out of heaviness into darkness. In order to prevent this, I will endeavor to show,

I. What manner of persons those were to whom the apostle says, "Ye are in heaviness:"

II. What kind of heaviness they were in:

III. What were the causes: and,

IV. What were the ends of it. I shall conclude with some inferences.

I. 1 I am, in the first place, to show what manner of

persons those were to whom the apostle says, "Ye are in heaviness." And, first, it is beyond all dispute, that they were believers at the time the apostle thus addressed them: for so he expressly says, (verse 5,) "Ye who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Again, (verse 7,) he mentions "the trial of their faith, much more precious than that of gold which perisheth." And yet again, (verse 9,) he speaks of their "receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls." At the same time, therefore, that they were "in heaviness," they were possessed of living faith. Their heaviness did not destroy their faith; they still "endured, as seeing Him that is invisible."

2 Neither did their heaviness destroy their peace; the "peace which passeth all understanding;" which is inseparable from true, living faith. This we may easily gather from the second verse, wherein the apostle prays, not that grace and *peace* may be *given* them, but only that it may "be *multiplied* unto" them; that the blessing which they already enjoyed might be more abundantly bestowed upon them.

3. The persons to whom the apostle here speaks were also full of a living hope. For thus he speaks, (verse 3,) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again,"—me and you, all of us who are "sanctified by the Spirit" and enjoy the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,"—"unto a living hope, unto an inheritance,"—that is, unto a living hope of an inheritance, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." So that, notwithstanding their heaviness, they still retained a hope full of immortality.

4. And they still "rejoiced in hope of the glory of God." They were filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. So, (verse 8,) the apostle having just mentioned the final "revelation of Jesus Christ," (namely, when he cometh to judge the world,) immediately adds, "In whom, though now ye see him not," not with your bodily eyes, "yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeak-

able and full of glory." Their heaviness, therefore, was not only consistent with living hope, but also with joy unspeakable: at the same time they were thus heavy, they nevertheless rejoiced with joy full of glory.

5. In the midst of their heaviness, they likewise still enjoyed the love of God, which had been shed abroad in their hearts;—"whom," says the apostle, "having not seen, ye love." Though ye have not seen him face to face; yet, knowing him by faith, ye have obeyed his word, "My son, give me thy heart." He is your God, and your love, the desire of your eyes, and your "exceeding great reward." Ye have sought and found happiness in Him: ye "delight in the Lord," and he hath given you your "heart's desire."

6. Once more: though they were heavy, yet were they holy; they retained the same power over sin. They were still "kept" from this, "by the power of God;" they were "obedient children, not fashioned according to their former desires;" but "as He that had called them is holy," so were they "holy in all manner of conversation." Knowing they were "redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without spot and without blemish," they had, through the faith and hope which they had in God, "purified their souls by the Spirit." So that, upon the whole, their heaviness well consisted with faith, with hope, with love of God and man, with the peace of God, with joy in the Holy Ghost, with inward and outward holiness. It did no way impair, much less destroy, any part of the work of God in their hearts. It did not at all interfere with that "sanctification of the Spirit" which is the root of all true obedience: neither with the happiness which must needs result from grace and peace reigning in the heart.

II. 1. Hence we may easily learn what kind of heaviness they were in;—the second thing which I shall endeavour to show. The word, in the original, is λυπηθεντες,—*made sorry, grieved;* from λυπη,—*grief,* or *sorrow.* This is the constant, literal meaning of the

word: and, this being observed, there is no ambiguity in the expression, nor any difficulty in understanding it. The persons spoken of here were *grieved:* the heaviness they were in was neither more nor less than *sorrow* or *grief;*—a passion which every child of man is well acquainted with.

2. It is probable our translators rendered it *heaviness,* (though a less common word,) to denote two things: first, the degree, and next, the continuance, of it. It does indeed seem, that it is not a slight or inconsiderable degree of grief which is here spoken of; but such as makes a strong impression upon, and sinks deep into, the soul. Neither does this appear to be a transient sorrow, such as passes away in an hour; but rather, such as, having taken fast hold of the heart, is not presently shaken off, but continues for some time, as a settled temper, rather than a passion, even in them that have living faith in Christ, and the genuine love of God in their hearts.

3. Even in these, this heaviness may sometimes be so deep, as to overshadow the whole soul; to give a colour, as it were, to all the affections; such as will appear in the whole behaviour. It may likewise have an influence over the body; particularly in those that are either of a naturally weak constitution, or weakened by some accidental disorder, especially of the nervous kind In many cases, we find "the corruptible body presses down the soul:" in this, the soul rather presses down the body, and weakens it more and more. Nay, I will not say that deep and lasting sorrow of heart may not sometimes weaken a strong constitution, and lay the foundation of such bodily disorders as are not easily removed: and yet, all this may consist with a measure of that faith which still worketh by love.

4. This may well be termed a "fiery trial:" and though it is not the same with that the apostle speaks of in the fourth chapter, yet many of the expressions there used concerning outward sufferings may be accommodated to this inward affliction. They cannot, indeed,

with any propriety, be applied to them that are in darkness. These do not, cannot rejoice; neither is it true, that "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon" them. But he frequently does on those that are in heaviness; so that, though sorrowful, yet are they always rejoicing.

III. 1. But to proceed to the third point: what are the causes of such sorrow or heaviness in a true believer? The apostle tells us clearly: "Ye are in heaviness," says he, "through manifold temptations;" ποικίλοις,—*manifold*, not only many in number, but of many kinds. They may be varied and diversified a thousand ways, by the change or addition of numberless circumstances. And this very diversity and variety make it more difficult to guard against them. Among these we may rank all bodily disorders; particularly acute diseases, and violent pain of every kind, whether affecting the whole body, or the smallest part of it. It is true, some, who have enjoyed uninterrupted health, and have felt none of these, may make light of them, and wonder that sickness or pain of body, should bring heaviness upon the mind. And perhaps one in a thousand is of so peculiar a constitution as not to feel pain like other men. So hath it pleased God to show his almighty power, by producing some of these prodigies of nature, who have seemed not to regard pain at all, though of the severest kind; if that contempt of pain was not owing partly to the force of education, partly to a preternatural cause,—to the power either of good or evil spirits, who raised these men above the state of mere nature. But, abstracting from these particular cases, it is, in general, a just observation, that

> "Pain is perfect misery, and extreme
> Quite overturns all patience."

And even where this is prevented by the grace of God, while men do "possess their souls in patience," it may, nevertheless, occasion much inward heaviness; the soul sympathizing with the body.

2. All diseases of long continuance, though less painful, are apt to produce the same effect. When God appoints over us consumption, or the chilling and burning ague, if it be not speedily removed, it will not only "consume the eyes," but "cause sorrow of heart." This is eminently the case with regard to all those which are termed *nervous disorders*. And faith does not overturn the course of nature: natural causes still produce natural effects. Faith no more hinders the *sinking of the spirits* (as it is called) in an hysteric illness, than the rising of the pulse in a fever.

3. Again: when "calamity cometh as a whirlwind, and poverty as an armed man;" is this a little temptation? Is it strange if it occasion sorrow and heaviness? Although this also may appear but a small thing to those that stand at a distance, or who look, and "pass by on the other side;" yet it is otherwise to them that feel it. "Having food and raiment," (indeed, the latter word, σκεπασματα, implies *lodging* as well as *apparel*,) we may, if the love of God is in our hearts, "be therewith content." But what shall they do who have none of these? who, as it were, "embrace the rock for a shelter?" who have only the earth to lie upon, and only the sky to cover them? who have not a dry, or warm, much less a clean, abode for themselves and their little ones? no, nor clothing to keep themselves, or those they love next themselves, from pinching cold, either by day or night? I laugh at the stupid heathen crying out,

> Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,
> Quàm quod ridiculos homines facit!

Has poverty nothing worse in it than this, that it *makes men liable to be laughed at?* It is a sign this idle poet talked by rote of the things which he knew not. Is not want of food something worse than this? God pronounced it as a curse upon man, that he should earn it "by the sweat of his brow." But how many are there in this Christian country, that toil, and labour

and sweat, and have it not at last, but struggle with weariness and hunger together? Is it not worse for one, after a hard day's labour, to come back to a poor, cold, dirty, uncomfortable lodging, and to find there not even the food which is needful to repair his wasted strength? You that live at ease in the earth, that want nothing but eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand how well God hath dealt with you,—is it not worse to seek bread day by day, and find none? perhaps to find the comfort also of five or six children crying for what he has not to give! Were it not that he is restrained by an unseen hand, would he not soon "curse God and die?" Oh, want of bread! want of bread! Who can tell what this means, unless he hath felt it himself? I am astonished that it occasions no more than heaviness even in them that believe.

4. Perhaps, next to this, we may place the death of those who were near and dear unto us; of a tender parent and one not much declined into the vale of years; of a beloved child, just rising into life, and clasping about our heart; of a friend that was as our own soul,—next the grace of God, the last, best gift of Heaven. And a thousand circumstances may enhance the distress. Perhaps the child, the friend, died in our embrace!—perhaps, was snatched away when we looked not for it! flourishing, cut down like a flower! In all these cases, we not only may, but ought to, be affected: it is the design of God that we should. He would not have us stocks and stones. He would have our affections regulated, not extinguished Therefore, "nature unreproved may drop a tear." There may be sorrow without sin.

5. A still deeper sorrow we may feel for those who are dead while they live; on account of the unkindness, ingratitude, apostasy, of those who were united to us in the closest ties. Who can express what a lover of souls may feel for a friend, a brother, dead to God? for a husband, a wife, a parent, a child, rushing into sin, as a horse into the battle; and, in spite of all arguments and

persuasion, hasting to work out his own damnation. And this anguish of spirit may be heightened to an inconceivable degree, by the consideration, that he who is now posting to destruction, once ran well in the way of life. Whatever he was in time past serves now to no other purpose than to make our reflections on what he is more piercing and afflictive.

6. In all these circumstances, we may be assured, our great adversary will not be wanting to improve his opportunity. He, who is always "walking about, seeking whom he may devour," will then, especially, use all his power, all his skill, if haply he may gain any advantage over the soul that is already cast down. He will not be sparing of his fiery darts, such as are most likely to find an entrance, and to fix most deeply in the heart, by their suitableness to the temptation that assaults it. He will labour to inject unbelieving, or blasphemous, or repining, thoughts. He will suggest that God does not regard, does not govern, the earth; or, at least, that he does not govern it aright, not by the rules of justice and mercy. He will endeavour to stir up the heart against God, to renew our natural enmity against him. And if we attempt to fight him with his own weapons, if we begin to reason with him, more and more heaviness will undoubtedly ensue, if not utter darkness.

7. It has been frequently supposed that there is another cause, if not of darkness, at least of heaviness; namely, God's withdrawing himself from the soul, because it is his sovereign will. Certainly he will do this, if we grieve his Holy Spirit, either by outward or inward sin; either by doing evil, or neglecting to do good; by giving way either to pride or anger, to spiritual sloth, to foolish desire, or inordinate affection. But that he ever withdraws himself *because he will*, merely because it is his good pleasure, I absolutely deny. There is no text in all the Bible which gives any colour for such a supposition. Nay, it is a supposition contrary, not only to many particular texts, but to the whole

tenor of Scripture. It is repugnant to the very nature of God: it is utterly beneath his majesty and wisdom, (as an eminent writer strongly expresses it,) "to play at bo-peep with his creatures." It is inconsistent both with his justice and mercy, and with the sound experience of all his children.

8. One more cause of heaviness is mentioned by many of those who were termed "mystic authors." And the notion has crept in, I know not how, even among plain people, who have no acquaintance with them. I cannot better explain this, than in the words of a late writer, who relates this as her own experience:—"I continued so happy in my Beloved, that, although I should have been forced to live a vagabond in a desert, I should have found no difficulty in it. This state had not lasted long, when, in effect, I found myself led into a desert. I found myself in a forlorn condition, altogether poor, wretched, and miserable. The proper source of this grief is, the knowledge of ourselves; by which we find that there is an extreme unlikeness between God and us. We see ourselves most opposite to him; and that our inmost soul is entirely corrupted, depraved, and full of all kind of evil and malignity, of the world and the flesh, and all sorts of abominations."—From hence it has been inferred, that the knowledge of ourselves, without which we should perish everlastingly, must, even after we have attained justifying faith, occasion the deepest heaviness.

9. But upon this I would observe, (1.) In the preceding paragraph, this writer says, "Hearing I had not a true faith in Christ, I offered myself up to God, and immediately felt his love." It may be so; and yet it does not appear that this was justification. It is more probable, it was no more than what are usually termed the "drawings of the Father." And if so, the heaviness and darkness which followed was no other than conviction of sin; which, in the nature of things, must precede that faith whereby we are justified. (2.) Suppose she was justified almost the same moment she

was convinced of wanting faith, there was then no time for that gradually-increasing self-knowledge which uses to precede justification: in this case, therefore, it came after, and was probably the more severe, the less it was expected. (3.) It is allowed there will be a far deeper, a far clearer and fuller knowledge of our inbred sin, of our total corruption by nature, after justification, than ever there was before it. But this need not occasion darkness of soul: I will not say, that it *must* bring us into heaviness. Were it so, the apostle would not have used that expression, *if need be;* for there would be an absolute, indispensable need of it, for all that would know themselves; that is, in effect, for all that would know the perfect love of God, and be thereby "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." But this is by no means the case. On the contrary, God may increase the knowledge of ourselves to any degree, and increase, in the same proportion, the knowledge of himself, and the experience of his love. And in this case there would be no "desert," no "misery," no "forlorn condition;" but love, and peace, and joy, gradually springing up into everlasting life.

IV. 1. For what ends, then, (which was the fourth thing to be considered,) does God permit heaviness to befall so many of his children? The apostle gives us a plain and direct answer to this important question: "That the trial of their faith, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Verse 7.) There may be an allusion to this, in that well-known passage of the fourth chapter: (although it primarily relates to quite another thing, as has been already observed:) "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you: but rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may likewise rejoice with exceeding great joy." (Verses 12, &c.)

2. Hence we learn, that the first and great end of God's permitting the temptations which bring heaviness on his children, is the trial of their faith, which is tried by these, even as gold by the fire. Now we know, gold tried in the fire is purified thereby; is separated from its dross. And so is faith in the fire of temptation; the more it is tried, the more it is purified;—yea, and not only purified, but also strengthened, confirmed, increased abundantly, by so many more proofs of the wisdom and power, the love and faithfulness of God. This, then,—to increase our faith,—is one gracious end of God's permitting those manifold temptations.

3. They serve to try, to purify, to confirm, and increase that living hope also, whereunto "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again of his abundant mercy." Indeed, our hope cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith. On this foundation it stands: believing in his name, living by faith in the Son of God, we hope for, we have a confident expectation of, the glory, which shall be revealed; and, consequently, whatever strengthens our faith, increases our hope also. At the same time it increases our joy in the Lord, which cannot but attend a hope full of immortality. In this view the apostle exhorts believers in the other chapter: "Rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ." On this very account, "happy are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:" and hereby ye are enabled, even in the midst of sufferings, to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. They rejoice the more, because the trials which increase their faith and hope increase their love also; both their gratitude to God for all his mercies, and their goodwill to all mankind. Accordingly, the more deeply sensible they are of the loving-kindness of God their Saviour, the more is their heart inflamed with love to him who "first loved us." The clearer and stronger evidence they have of the glory that shall be revealed, the more do they love Him who hath pur-

chased it for them, and "given them the earnest" there of "in their hearts." And this, the increase of their love, is another end of the temptations permitted to come upon them.

5. Yet another is their advance in holiness; holiness of heart, and holiness of conversation;—the latter naturally resulting from the former; for a good tree will bring forth good fruit. And all inward holiness is the immediate fruit of the faith that worketh by love. By this the blessed Spirit purifies the heart from pride, self-will, passion; from love of the world, from foolish and hurtful desires, from vile and vain affections. Beside that, sanctified afflictions have, through the grace of God, an immediate and direct tendency to holiness. Through the operation of his Spirit, they humble, more and more, and abase the soul before God. They calm and meeken our turbulent spirit, tame the fierceness of our nature, soften our obstinacy and self-will, crucify us to the world, and bring us to expect all our strength from, and to seek all our happiness in, God.

6. And all these terminate in that great end, that our faith, hope, love, and holiness "may be found," if it doth not yet appear, "unto praise" from God himself, "and honour" from men and angels, "and glory" assigned by the great Judge to all that have endured unto the end. And this will be assigned in that awful day to every man, "according to his works;" according to the work which God had wrought in his heart, and the outward works which he has wrought for God; and likewise according to what he had suffered: so that all these trials are unspeakable gain. So many ways do these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

7. Add to this the advantage which others may receive by seeing our behaviour under affliction. We find by experience, example frequently makes a deeper impression upon us than precept. And what example

have a stronger influence, not only on those who are partakers of like precious faith, but even on them who have not known God, than that of a soul calm and serene in the midst of storms; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; meekly accepting whatever is the will of God, however grievous it may be to nature; saying, in sickness and pain, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—in loss or want, "The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

V. 1. I am to conclude with some inferences. And, first, how wide is the difference between darkness of soul and heaviness; which, nevertheless, are so generally confounded with each other, even by experienced Christians! Darkness, or the wilderness-state, implies a total loss of joy in the Holy Ghost: heaviness does not; in the midst of this we may "rejoice with joy unspeakable." They that are in darkness have lost the peace of God: they that are in heaviness have not; so far from it, that at the very time "peace," as well as "grace," may "be multiplied" unto them. In the former, the love of God is waxed cold, if it be not utterly extinguished: in the latter, it retains its full force, or, rather, increases daily. In these, faith itself, if not totally lost, is, however, grievously decayed: their evidence and conviction of things not seen, particularly of the pardoning love of God, is not so clear or strong as in time past; and their trust in him is proportionably weakened:—those, though they see him not, yet have a clear, unshaken confidence in God, and an abiding evidence of that love whereby all their sins are blotted out. So that as long as we can distinguish faith from unbelief, hope from despair, peace from war, the love of God from the love of the world, we may infallibly distinguish heaviness from darkness!

2. We may learn from hence, secondly, that there may be need of heaviness, but there can be no need of darkness. There may be need of our being in "heaviness for a season," in order to the ends above recited; at

least, in this sense; as it is a natural result of those "manifold temptations," which are needful to try and increase our faith, to confirm and enlarge our hope, to purify our heart from all unholy tempers, and to perfect us in love. And, by consequence, they are needful in order to brighten our crown, and add to our eternal weight of glory. But we cannot say, that darkness is needful in order to any of these ends. It is no way conducive to them; the loss of faith, hope, love, is surely neither conducive to holiness, nor to the increase of that reward in heaven which will be in proportion to our holiness on earth.

3. From the apostle's manner of speaking we may gather, thirdly, that even heaviness is not *always* needful. "Now, for a season, if need be:" so it is not needful for *all persons;* nor for any person at *all times.* God is able, he has both power and wisdom, to work, when he pleases, the same work of grace in my soul by other means. And in some instances he does so; he causes those whom it pleaseth him to go on from strength to strength, even till they "perfect holiness in his fear," with scarce any heaviness at all; as having an absolute power over the heart of man, and moving all the springs of it at his pleasure. But these cases are rare: God generally sees good to try "acceptable men in the furnace of affliction." So that manifold temptations, and heaviness, more or less, are usually the portion of his dearest children.

4. We ought, therefore, lastly, to watch and pray, and use our utmost endeavours to avoid falling into darkness. But we need not be solicitous how to avoid, so much as how to improve by, heaviness. Our great care should be, so to behave ourselves under it, so wait upon the Lord therein, that it may fully answer all the design of his love, in permitting it to come upon us, that it may be a means of increasing our faith, of confirming our hope, of perfecting us in all holiness. Whenever it comes, let us have an eye to those gracious ends for which it is permitted, and use all diligence

that we may not make void the counsel of God against ourselves. Let us earnestly work together with him, by the grace which he is continually giving us, in "purifying ourselves from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit," and daily growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, till we are received into his everlasting kingdom!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLVII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What was spoken of in the preceding discourse?

Ques. 2. (¶ 1.) What is proposed in the first place?

Ques. 3. (I. 2.) What is said of the peace of these persons?

Ques. 4. (I. 3.) What is said of their living hope?

Ques. 5. (I. 4.) What of their joy?

Ques. 6. (I. 5.) What else did they enjoy?

Ques. 7. (I. 6.) What more is said of them?

Ques. 8. (II. 1.) What may we learn from these facts?

Ques. 9. (II. 2.) Why did our translators render it "heaviness?"

Ques. 10. (II. 3.) What is said of the effects of this heaviness?

Ques. 11. (II. 4.) What may this be well termed?

Ques. 12. (III. 1.) What is the third point stated?

Ques. 13. (III. 2.) What is said of diseases of long continuance?

Ques. 14. (III. 3.) What effect follows sudden calamity?

Ques. 15. (III. 4.) What is said of the death of near kindred?

Ques. 16. (III. 5.) What may be a still deeper sorrow?

Ques. 17. (III. 6.) What is said of Satan's concern in these affairs?

Ques. 18. (III. 7.) What has been frequently supposed? What is said of this supposition?

Ques. 19. (III. 8.) What cause is mentioned by mystic authors?

Ques. 20. (III. 9.) What is observed upon this?

Ques. 21. (IV. 1.) What is the fourth thing to be considered?

Ques. 22. (IV. 2.) What do we therefore learn?

Ques. 23. (IV. 3.) What service do temptations perform?

Ques. 24. (IV. 4.) What do these trials increase?

Ques. 25. (IV. 5.) What is yet another effect?

Ques. 26. (IV. 6.) In what end do they terminate?

Ques. 27. (IV. 7.) What advantage do others desire?

Ques. 28. (V. 1.) What does he conclude with?

Ques. 29. (V. 2.) What do we learn secondly?

Ques. 30. (V. 3.) What do we gather, thirdly, from the apostle's manner of speaking?

Ques. 31. (V. 4.) What ought we therefore to do? Should we be more solicitous to avoid or to improve by heaviness?

Ques. 32. (V. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XLVIII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Prof. Burwash regards the five sermons, XLVIII.-LII. inclusive, as a supplement to Mr. Wesley's system of Christian ethics. We may well designate them as a principal part of that system. There has never been a period in our history in which the essential doctrines taught in these five sermons were more appropriate to the pulpit than at the present time. We begin their examination with the sermon on self-denial. In the infancy of a nation, when the superfluities and luxuries of human life are of necessity within the reach of but few, the field for the exercise of self-denial with respect to temporal things is narrow. It is true that poverty furnishes a sufficiently thorough discipline in the exercise of this duty, but the acquisition of wealth presents another and a different kind.

It must be observed that Mr. Wesley had no tendency toward any form of "socialist" theories. He taught with clearness and force the right to the possession of individual property, but always as the steward of the Lord. He did not recognize the right of the State to the ownership of all the land in the country, to be administered for the benefit of all alike, the idle and the industrious. He taught the doctrine of industry, of labor for the possession of temporal goods, but these must be held subject to the demands of charity in behalf of the sick, the needy, and the innocent unfortunates. To this end, that men may have wherewith to do good to others, we must learn to deny ourselves all unnecessary things. As hurtful to health, some must be dis-

pensed with. As provocative of sinful pride and display, others must be given up. As a means of spiritual training and of heart-education, self-denial occupies an important place in our Christian life.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLVIII.

Self-denial is a universal duty, and of the very essence of religion. Yet mistakes are common with regard to the nature, extent, or necessity of it. It is sometimes made so general as to be indefinite, or placed in such particulars as not to apply to all men.

I. The nature of self-denial. Antinomian prejudices against it. It is founded on the supremacy of the will of God; hence applies even to the angels in heaven. But it applies especially to man, whose will by nature is averse from God. Self-denial is the subordination of our will to that of God. Taking up our cross goes further, and not only denies our will, but endures the positive pain. Sometimes we bear the cross which we do not willingly take up. It is not a disciplining of ourselves, as scourging and such like practices; but the embracing God's will as revealed in his Word or manifest in his providence.

II. The lack of this is the common cause which prevents our being fully Christ's disciples. The convicted sinner is unwilling to deny himself of sin; hence loses his convictions, or, if they remain, he finds no peace. The child of God has neglected to deny some pleasing sin, and hence has grieved the Holy Spirit; or he has not taken up his cross, using all the means, and devoting himself entirely to God, hence he does not go on to perfection.

III. Hence we learn the mistake of those who oppose self-denial, the cause of spiritual delusion, the importance of making this Christian duty prominent, and the danger of neglecting it.

SERMON XLVIII.

SELF-DENIAL.

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."—LUKE ix. 23.

1. IT has been frequently imagined, that the direction here given related chiefly, if not wholly, to the apostles; at least, to the Christians of the first ages, or those in a state of persecution. But this is a grievous mistake: for although our blessed Lord is here directing his discourse more immediately to his apostles, and those other disciples who attended him in the days of his flesh; yet, in them he speaks to us, and to all mankind, without any exception or limitation. The very reason of the thing puts it beyond dispute, that the duty which is here enjoined is not peculiar to them, or to the Christians of the early ages. It no more regards any particular order of men, or particular time, than any particular country. No: it is of the most universal nature, respecting all times, and all persons, yea, and all things; not meats and drinks only, and things pertaining to the senses. The meaning is, "If any man," of whatever rank, station, circumstances, in any nation, in any age of the world, "will" effectually "come after me, let him deny himself" in all things; let him "take up his cross," of whatever kind; yea, and that "daily; and follow me."

2. The *denying* ourselves, and the *taking up our cross*, in the full extent of the expression, is not a thing of small concern: it is not expedient only, as are some of the circumstantials of religion; but it is absolutely, indispensably necessary, either to our becoming or continuing his disciples. It is absolutely necessary, in the

very nature of the thing, to our coming after him, and following him; insomuch that, as far as we do not practise it, we are not his disciples. If we do not continually deny ourselves, we do not learn of Him, but of other masters. If we do not take up our cross daily, we do not come after him, but after the world, or the prince of the world, or our own fleshly mind. If we are not walking in the way of the cross, we are not following Him; we are not treading in his steps; but going back from, or at least wide of, him.

3. It is for this reason, that so many ministers of Christ, in almost every age and nation, particularly since the reformation of the church from the innovations and corruptions gradually crept into it, have wrote and spoke so largely on this important duty, both in their public discourses and private exhortations. This induced them to disperse abroad many tracts upon the subject; and some in our own nation. They knew, both from the oracles of God, and from the testimony of their own experience, how impossible it was not to deny our Master, unless we will deny ourselves; and how vainly we attempt to follow Him that was crucified, unless we take up our own cross daily.

4. But may not this very consideration make it reasonable to inquire, If so much has been said and wrote on the subject already, what need is there to say or write any more? I answer, There are no inconsiderable numbers, even of people fearing God, who have not had the opportunity either of hearing what has been spoke, or reading what has been wrote, upon it. And, perhaps, if they had read much of what has been written, they would not have been much profited. Many who have wrote. (some of them large volumes,) do by no means appear to have understood the subject. Either they had imperfect views of the very nature of it, (and then they could never explain it to others,) or they were unacquainted with the due extent of it; they did not see how exceeding broad this command is; or they

were not sensible of the absolute, the indispensable necessity of it. Others speak of it in so dark, so perplexed, so intricate, so mystical a manner, as if they designed rather to conceal it from the vulgar, than to explain it to common readers. Others speak admirably well, with great clearness and strength, on the necessity of self-denial; but then they deal in generals only, without coming to particular instances, and so are of little use to the bulk of mankind, to men of ordinary capacity and education. And if some of them do descend to particulars, it is to those particulars only which do not affect the generality of men, since they seldom, if ever, occur in common life;—such as the enduring imprisonment, or tortures; the giving up, in a literal sense, their houses or lands, their husbands or wives, children, or life itself; to none of which we are called, nor are likely to be, unless God should permit times of public persecution to return. In the mean time, I know of no writer in the English tongue who has described the nature of self-denial in plain and intelligible terms, such as lie level with common understandings, and applied it to those little particulars which daily occur in common life. A discourse of this kind is wanted still; and it is wanted the more, because in every stage of the spiritual life, although there is a variety of particular hinderances of our attaining grace or growing therein, yet are all resolvable into these general ones,—either we do not deny ourselves, or we do not take up our cross.

In order to supply this defect in some degree, I shall endeavour to show, first, what it is for a man to deny himself, and what to take up his cross; and, secondly, that if a man be not fully Christ's disciple, it is always owing to the want of this.

I. 1. I shall, first, endeavour to show, what it is for a man to "deny himself, and take up his cross daily." This is a point which is, of all others, most necessary to be considered and thoroughly understood, even on this account, that it is, of all others, most opposed by numer-

ous and powerful enemies. All our nature must certainly rise up against this, even in its own defence; the world, consequently, the men who take nature, not grace, for their guide, abhor the very sound of it. And the great enemy of our souls, well knowing its importance, cannot but move every stone against it. But this is not all: even those who have in some measure shaken off the yoke of the devil, who have experienced, especially of late years, a real work of grace in their hearts, yet are no friends to this grand doctrine of Christianity, though it is so peculiarly insisted on by their Master. Some of them are as deeply and totally ignorant concerning it, as if there was not one word about it in the Bible. Others are farther off still, having unawares imbibed strong prejudices against it. These they have received partly from outside Christians, men of a fair speech and behaviour, who want nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit:—and partly from those who did once, if they do not now, "taste of the powers of the world to come." But are there any of these who do not both practise self-denial themselves, and recommend it to others? You are little acquainted with mankind, if you doubt of this. There are whole bodies of men who only do not declare war against it. To go no farther than London: look upon the whole body of Predestinarians, who by the free mercy of God have lately been called out of the darkness of nature into the light of faith. Are they patterns of self-denial? How few of them even profess to practise it all! How few of them recommend it themselves, or are pleased with them that do! Rather, do they not continually represent it in the most odious colours, as if it were seeking "salvation by works," or seeking "to establish our own righteousness?" And how readily do Antinomians of all kinds, from the smooth Moravian, to the boisterous, foul-mouthed Ranter, join the cry, with their silly, unmeaning cant of *legality* and *preaching the law!* Therefore you are in constant danger of being wheedled, hectored, or ridi-

culed out of this important gospel doctrine, either by false teachers, or false brethren, (more or less beguiled from the simplicity of the gospel,) if you are not deeply grounded therein. Let fervent prayer, then, go before, accompany, and follow what you are now about to read, that it may be written in your heart by the finger of God, so as never to be erased.

2. But what is self-denial? Wherein are we to deny ourselves? And whence does the necessity of this arise? I answer, the will of God is the supreme, unalterable rule for every intelligent creature; equally binding every angel in heaven, and every man upon earth. Nor can it be otherwise: this is the natural, necessary result of the relation between creatures and their Creator. But if the will of God be our one rule of action in every thing, great and small, it follows, by undeniable consequence, that we are not to do our own will in any thing. Here, therefore, we see at once the nature, with the ground and reason, of self-denial. We see the nature of self-denial: it is the denying or refusing to follow our own will, from a conviction that the will of God is the only rule of action to us. And we see the reason thereof, because we are creatures; because "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

3. This reason for self-denial must hold, even with regard to the angels of God in heaven; and with regard to man, innocent and holy, as he came out of the hands of his Creator. But a further reason for it arises from the condition wherein all men are since the fall. We are all now "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us." Our nature is altogether corrupt in every power and faculty. And our will, depraved equally with the rest, is wholly bent to indulge our natural corruption. On the other hand, it is the will of God that we resist and counteract that corruption, not at some times or in some things only, but at all times, and in all things. Here, therefore, is a further ground for constant and universal self-denial.

4. To illustrate this a little further: The will of God is a path leading straight to God. The will of man, which once ran parallel with it, is now another path, not only different from it, but, in our present state, directly contrary to it: it leads from God. If, therefore, we walk in the one, we must necessarily quit the other. We cannot walk in both. Indeed, a man *of faint heart and feeble hands* may *go in two ways*, one after the other. But he cannot walk in two ways at the same time: he cannot, at one and the same time, follow his own will, and follow the will of God: he must choose the one or the other: denying God's will, to follow his own; or denying himself, to follow the will of God.

5. Now, it is undoubtedly pleasing, for the time, to follow our own will, by indulging, in any instance that offers, the corruption of our nature: but by following it in any thing, we so far strengthen the perverseness of our will; and by indulging it we continually increase the corruption of our nature. So, by the food which is agreeable to the palate, we often increase a bodily disease: it gratifies the taste, but it inflames the disorder; it brings pleasure, but it also brings death.

6. On the whole, then, to deny ourselves, is, to deny our own will, where it does not fall in with the will of God; and that however pleasing it may be. It is, to deny ourselves any pleasure which does not spring from and lead to God; that is, in effect, to refuse going out of our way, though into a pleasant, flowery path; to refuse what we know to be deadly poison, though agreeable to the taste.

7. And every one that would follow Christ, tha would be his real disciple, must not only deny himself, but "take up his cross" also. A cross is any thing contrary to our will, any thing displeasing to our nature. So that taking up our cross goes a little further than denying ourselves; it rises a little higher, and is a more difficult task to flesh and blood;—it being more easy to forego pleasure, than to endure pain

8. Now, in running "the race that is set before us," according to the will of God, there is often a cross lying in the way; that is, something which is not only not joyous, but grievous; something which is contrary to our will, which is displeasing to our nature. What then is to be done? The choice is plain: either we must take up our cross, or we must turn aside from the way of God, "from the holy commandment delivered to us;" if we do not stop altogether, or turn back to everlasting perdition!

9. In order to the healing of that corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world, it is often needful to pluck out, as it were, a right eye, to cut off a right hand;—so painful is either the thing itself which must be done, or the only means of doing it; the parting, suppose, with a foolish desire, with an inordinate affection; or a separation from the object of it, without which it can never be extinguished. In the former kind, the tearing away such a desire or affection, when it is deeply rooted in the soul, is often like the piercing of a sword, yea, like "the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow." The Lord then sits upon the soul as a refiner's fire, to burn up all the dross thereof. And this is a cross indeed; it is essentially painful; it must be so, in the very nature of the thing. The soul cannot be thus torn asunder, it cannot pass through the fire, without pain.

10. In the latter kind, the means to heal a sin-sick soul, to cure a foolish desire, an inordinate affection, are often painful, not in the nature of the thing, but from the nature of the disease. So when our Lord said to the rich young man, "Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," (as well knowing, this was the only means of healing his covetousness,) the very thought of it gave him so much pain, that "he went away sorrowful;" choosing rather to part with his hope of heaven, than his possessions on earth. This was a burden he could not consent to lift, a cross he would not take up. And in

the one kind or the other, every follower of Christ will surely have need to "take up his cross daily."

11. The "taking up" differs a little from "bearing his cross." We are then properly said to "bear our cross," when we endure what is laid upon us without our choice with meekness and resignation. Whereas, we do not properly "take up our cross," but when we voluntarily suffer what it is in our power to avoid; when we willingly embrace the will of God, though contrary to our own; when we choose what is painful, because it is the will of our wise and gracious Creator.

12. And thus it behoves every disciple of Christ to take up, as well as to bear, his cross. Indeed, in one sense, it is not *his* alone: it is common to him, and many others; seeing there is no temptation befalls any man, *ει μη ανθρωπινος*,—"but such as is common to men;" such as is incident and adapted to their common nature and situation in the present world. But, in another sense, as it is considered with all its circumstances, it is his; peculiar to himself; it is prepared of God for him; it is given by God to him, as a token of his love. And if he receives it as such, and, after using such means to remove the pressure as Christian wisdom directs, lies as clay in the potter's hand; it is disposed and ordered by God for his good, both with regard to the quality of it, and in respect to its quantity and degree, its duration, and every other circumstance.

13. In all this, we may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the Physician of our souls, not merely "for his own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." If, in searching our wounds, he puts us to pain, it is only in order to heal them. He cuts away what is putrefied or unsound, in order to preserve the sound part. And if we freely choose the loss of a limb, rather than the whole body should perish; how much more should we choose, figuratively, to cut off a right hand, rather than the whole soul should be cast into hell!

14. We see plainly, then, both the nature and ground

of taking up our cross. It does not imply the *disciplining ourselves;* (as some speak;) the literally tearing our own flesh; the wearing hair-cloth, or iron girdles, or any thing else that would impair our bodily health: (although we know not what allowance God may make for those who act thus through involuntary ignorance:) but the embracing the will of God, though contrary to our own; the choosing wholesome, though bitter, medicine; the freely accepting temporary pain, of whatever kind and in whatever degree, when it is either essentially or accidentally necessary to eternal pleasure.

II. 1. I am, secondly, to show, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial, or taking up his cross, that any man does not throughly follow him, is not fully a disciple of Christ.

It is true, this may be partly owing, in some cases, to the want of the means of grace; of hearing the true word of God spoken with power; of the sacraments, or of Christian fellowship. But where none of these is wanting, the great hinderance of our receiving or growing in the grace of God is always the want of denying ourselves, or taking up our cross.

2. A few instances will make this plain. A man hears the word which is able to save his soul: he is well-pleased with what he hears, acknowledges the truth, and is a little affected by it; yet he remains "dead in trespasses and sins," senseless and unawakened. Why is this? Because he will not part with his bosom-sin, though he now knows it is an abomination to the Lord. He came to hear, full of lust and unholy desire; and he will not part with them. Therefore no deep impression is made upon him, but his foolish heart is still hardened; that is, he is still senseless and unawakened, because he will not "deny himself."

3. Suppose he begins to awake out of sleep, and his eyes are a little opened, why are they so quickly closed again? Why does he again sink into the sleep of death? Because he again yields to his bosom-sin; he drinks again of the pleasing poison. Therefore it is impossible

that any lasting impression should be made upon his heart; that is, he relapses into his fatal insensibility, because he will not "deny himself."

4. But this is not the case with all. We have many instances of those who when once awakened sleep no more. The impressions once received do not wear away: they are not only deep, but lasting. And yet, many of these have not found what they seek: they mourn, and yet are not comforted. Now, why is this? It is because they do not "bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" because they do not, according to the grace they have received, "cease from evil, and do good." They do not cease from the easily besetting sin, the sin of their constitution, of their education, or of their profession; or they omit doing the good they may, and know they ought to do, because of some disagreeable circumstances attending it: that is, they do not attain faith, because they will not "deny themselves," or "take up their cross."

5. But this man did receive "the heavenly gift;" he did "taste of the powers of the world to come;" he saw "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" "the peace which passeth all understanding" did rule his heart and mind; and the "love of God was shed abroad" therein "by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him;"—yet he is now weak as another man; he again relishes the things of earth, and has more taste for the things which are seen than for those which are not seen; the eye of his understanding is closed again, so that he cannot "see Him that is invisible;" his love is waxed cold, and the peace of God no longer rules in his heart. And no marvel; for he has again given place to the devil, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. He has turned again unto folly, to some pleasing sin, if not in outward act, yet in heart. He has given place to pride, or anger, or desire, to self-will, or stubbornness. Or he did not stir up the gift of God which was in him; he gave way to spiritual sloth, and would not be at the pains "of praying always, and watching thereunto with all

perseverance:" that is, he made shipwreck of the faith, for want of self-denial, and taking up his cross daily.

6. But perhaps he has not made shipwreck of the faith: he has still a measure of the Spirit of adoption, which continues to witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. However, he is not "going on to perfection;" he is not, as once, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting after the whole image and full enjoyment of God, as the hart after the waterbrook. Rather he is weary and faint in his mind, and, as it were, hovering between life and death. And why is he thus, but because he hath forgotten the word of God,—"By works is faith made perfect?" He does not use all diligence in working the works of God. He does not "continue instant in prayer," private as well as public; in communicating, hearing, meditation, fasting, and religious conference. If he does not wholly neglect some of these means, at least he does not use them all with his might. Or he is not zealous of works of charity, as well as works of piety. He is not merciful after his power, with the full ability which God giveth. He does not fervently serve the Lord by doing good to men, in every kind and in every degree he can, to their souls as well as their bodies. And why does he not continue in prayer? Because in times of dryness it is pain and grief unto him. He does not continue in hearing at all opportunities, because sleep is sweet; or it is cold, or dark, or rainy. But why does he not continue in works of mercy? Because he cannot feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, unless he retrench the expense of his own apparel, or use cheaper and less pleasing food. Beside which, the visiting the sick or those that are in prison is attended with many disagreeable circumstances. And so are most works of spiritual mercy; reproof in particular. He *would* reprove his neighbour; but sometimes shame, sometimes fear, comes between: for he may expose himself, not only to ridicule, but to heavier inconveniences too. Upon these and the like considerations he omits one or more, if not all, works of mercy

and piety. Therefore, his faith is not made perfect, neither can he grow in grace; namely, because he will not deny himself, and take up his daily cross.

7. It manifestly follows, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial or taking up his cross that a man does not throughly follow his Lord, that he is not fully a disciple of Christ. It is owing to this, that he who is dead in sin does not awake, though the trumpet be blown; that he who begins to awake out of sleep, yet has no deep or lasting conviction; that he who is deeply and lastingly convinced of sin does not attain remission of sins; that some who have received this heavenly gift retain it not, but make shipwreck of the faith; and that others, if they do not draw back to perdition, yet are weary and faint in their mind, and do not reach the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

III. 1. How easily may we learn hence, that they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God, who directly or indirectly, in public or in private, oppose the doctrine of self-denial and the daily cross! How totally ignorant are these men of a hundred particular texts, as well as of the general tenor of the whole oracles of God! And how entirely unacquainted must they be with true, genuine, Christian experience;—of the manner wherein the Holy Spirit ever did, and does at this day, work in the souls of men! They may talk, indeed, very loudly and confidently, (a natural fruit of ignorance,) as though they were the only men who understood either the word of God, or the experience of his children: but their words are, in every sense, *vain words;* they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

2. We may learn from hence, secondly, the real cause why not only many particular persons, but even bodies of men, who were once burning and shining lights, have now lost both their light and heat. If they did not hate and oppose, they at least lightly esteemed, this precious gospel doctrine. If they did not boldly say, "*Abnegationem omnem proculcamus, internecioni da-*

mus;" "We trample all self-denial under foot, we devote it to destruction;" yet they neither valued it according to its high importance, nor took any pains in practising it. "*Hanc mystici docent*," said that great, bad man: "The *mystic* writers teach self-denial."—No: the *inspired* writers! And God teaches it to every soul who is willing to hear his voice!

3. We may learn from hence, thirdly, that it is not enough for a minister of the gospel not to oppose the doctrine of self-denial, to say nothing concerning it. Nay, he cannot satisfy his duty by saying a little in favour of it. If he would, indeed, be pure from the blood of all men, he must speak of it frequently and largely; he must inculcate the necessity of it in the clearest and strongest manner; he must press it with his might, on all persons, at all times, and in all places; laying "line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept;" so shall he have a conscience void of offence; so shall he save his own soul and those that hear him.

4. Lastly: see that you apply this, every one of you, to your own soul. Meditate upon it when you are in secret: ponder it in your heart! Take care not only to understand it throughly, but to remember it to your lives' end! Cry unto the Strong for strength, that you may no sooner understand than enter upon the practice of it! Delay not the time, but practise it immediately, from this very hour! Practise it universally, on every one of the thousand occasions which occur in all circumstances of life! Practise it daily, without intermission from the hour you first set your hand to the plough, and enduring therein to the end, till your spirit returns to God!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLVIII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What has been frequently imagined?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said not to be a thing of small concern?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Why have ministers written largely on this subject?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What is said of more writing on this subject?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What does he propose to show, first?

Ques. 6. (I. 2.) How is self-denial defined? What reason is given for it?

Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What is said of the obligation of it, even in the case of angels?

Ques. 8. (I. 4.) How is this illustrated?

Ques. 9. (I. 5.) What is a pleasing practice?

Ques. 10. (I. 6.) What is it, then, to deny ourselves?

Ques. 11. (I. 7.) What else must the follower of Christ do?

Ques. 12. (I. 8.) What do we find in running the race set before us?

Ques. 13. (I. 9.) What is necessary for the healing of that corruption?

Ques. 14. (I. 10.) What means are often painful?

Ques. 15. (I. 11.) When are we properly said to bear our cross?

Ques. 16. (I. 12.) What does it behoove every disciple to do?

Ques. 17. (I. 13.) What may we easily conceive?

Ques. 18. (I. 14.) What does taking up the cross imply? What abuses of the doctrine are pointed out?

Ques. 19. (II. 1.) What is shown, secondly?

Ques. 20. (II. 2.) What instances are here mentioned?

Ques. 21. (II. 3.) What question is here asked. How answered?

Ques. 22. (II. 4.) Is this the case with all?

Ques. 23. (II. 5.) What is said of the once enlightened man?

Ques. 24. (II. 6.) What is said of the halting believer?

Ques. 25. (II. 7.) What is always lacking in the cases mentioned?

Ques. 26. (III. 1.) What may we learn from this argument?

Ques. 27. (III. 2.) What may we learn, secondly?

Ques. 28. (III. 3.) What may we learn, thirdly? Are we faithful in the discharge of duty when we fail to mention self-denial, although we do not oppose it?

Ques. 29. (III. 4.) What exhortation is here given? How does it impress you while you recall your own experience in the pulpit? Do you exhort others, and set an example yourself?

SERMON XLIX.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

The student is advised to study, in connection with this sermon, the remarkable words of St. James on the government of the tongue. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James i. 26.) This is only another form of the statement made by our Saviour: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. xii. 37.) But the principle involved in these texts is too generally overlooked, in the pulpit and out of it. What a test of Christian character is this! How gravely are we rebuked, even in those things wherein we least expect ourselves to be in fault! But St. James proceeds further. He is not content with the simple enunciation of a great principle which is fundamental in its character. He proceeds, in the third chapter of his Epistle, to a thorough and exhaustive examination of the question. The government of the tongue is so essential that he illustrates the subject by several striking metaphors. A ship is a large body, but it is turned about by a small rudder, a few feet of plank directing the course of the greatest vessel on the waters. When we see the size of the ship and the bulk of the human body, the rudder is as small measured by the one as the tongue is when compared with the other. So, also, a spark of fire may produce a conflagration that will destroy a large city.

Then we have a third statement of this truth, in a form of words which we will do well to examine thoroughly. "If

any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James iii 2.) Here is the foundation for the argument and the illustrations that follow. The bit, the rudder, and the spark of fire, how forcibly do they present the subject to our understanding! The self-will of the horse is controlled by the bit and bridle; the fierce winds are resisted, and sometimes made obedient to the seaman's will by the little rudder, the unseen but indispensable part of the ship. We have the doctrine of self-denial in the figure of the bit and bridle, whilst the rudder illustrates the influence of temptations when the helm is in a steady hand. But who and what can supply the hand that holds the bit and guides the rudder? Only the sovereign grace of God! Without that we are like the rider whose horse has the bit in his teeth, or the ship that has lost its rudder, and is at the mercy of the winds! Dissensions, heart-burnings, family and neighborhood broils, how many of these may be prevented by prudent counsels! "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips, the king shall be his friend."

ANALYSIS OF SERMON XLIX.

Evil-speaking distinguished from lying or slandering. The prevalence of this sin, and the difficulty of avoiding it. Danger of being betrayed by holy indignation against sin. Our Lord's method.

I. Private expostulation, in the spirit of love, in person, by a trusty messenger, or by letter. This first step absolutely imperative except when the life, property, or important interests of others are at stake.

II. Expostulation in the presence of witnesses. These must be carefully chosen. Method of proceeding. No permission to neglect this step.

III. Appeal to the Church. In its proper officers. This step cannot be neglected, and must come in proper order.

Exhortation to walk by this rule, and put away all evil-speaking.

SERMON XLIX.

THE CURE OF EVIL-SPEAKING.

"*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

'*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

"*And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.*"—MATT. xviii. 15—17.

1. "SPEAK evil of no man," says the great apostle:—as plain a command as, "Thou shalt do no murder." But who, even among Christians, regards this command? Yea, how few are there that so much as understand it! What is evil-speaking? It is not, as some suppose, the same with lying or slandering. All a man says may be as true as the Bible; and yet the saying of it is evil-speaking. For evil-speaking is neither more nor less than speaking evil of an absent person; relating something evil, which was really done or said by one that is not present when it is related. Suppose, having seen a man drunk, or heard him curse or swear, I tell this when he is absent; it is evil-speaking. In our language this is also, by an extremely proper name, termed "back-biting." Nor is there any material difference between this and what we usually style "tale-bearing." If the tale be delivered in a soft and quiet manner, (perhaps with expressions of good-will to the person, and of hope that things may not be quite so bad,) then we call it

"whispering." But in whatever manner it be done, the thing is the same;—the same in substance, if not in circumstance. Still it is evil-speaking; still this command, "Speak evil of no man," is trampled under foot; if we relate to another the fault of a third person, when he is not present to answer for himself.

2. And how extremely common is this sin, among all orders and degrees of men! How do high and low rich and poor, wise and foolish, learned and unlearned run into it continually! Persons who differ from each other in all things else, nevertheless agree in this. How few are there that can testify before God, "I am clear in this matter; I have always set a watch before my mouth, and kept the door of my lips!" What conversation do you hear, of any considerable length, whereof evil-speaking is not one ingredient? and that even among persons who, in the general, have the fear of God before their eyes, and do really desire to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

3. And the very commonness of this sin makes it difficult to be avoided. As we are encompassed with it on every side, so, if we are not deeply sensible of the danger, and continually guarding against it, we are liable to be carried away by the torrent. In this instance, almost the whole of mankind is, as it were, in a conspiracy against us. And their example steals upon us, we know not how; so that we insensibly slide into the imitation of it. Besides, it is recommended from within, as well as from without. There is scarce any wrong temper in the mind of man which may not be occasionally gratified by it, and consequently incline us to it. It gratifies our pride to relate those faults of others whereof we think ourselves not to be guilty. Anger, resentment, and all unkind tempers, are indulged by speaking against those with whom we are displeased; and, in many cases, by reciting the sins of their neighbours, men indulge their own foolish and hurtful desires.

4. Evil-speaking is the more difficult to be avoided, because it frequently attacks us in disguise. We speak thus out of a noble, generous, (it is well if we do not say,) holy indignation, against these vile creatures! We commit sin from mere hatred of sin! We serve the devil out of pure zeal for God! It is merely in order to punish the wicked that we run into this wickedness. "So do the passions" (as one speaks) "all justify themselves," and palm sin upon us under the veil of holiness!

5. But is there no way to avoid the snare? Unquestionably there is. Our blessed Lord has marked out a plain way for his followers, in the words above recited. None, who warily and steadily walk in this path, will ever fall into evil-speaking. This rule is either an infallible preventive, or a certain cure, of it. In the preceding verses, our Lord had said, "Wo to the world, because of offences;"—unspeakable misery will arise in the world from this baleful fountain: (*offences* are all things whereby any one is turned out of, or hindered in, the ways of God:) "for it must be that offences come:"—such is the nature of things; such the wickedness, folly, and weakness of mankind: "but wo to that man,"—miserable is that man, "by whom the offence cometh." "Wherefore, if thy hand, thy foot, thine eye, cause thee to offend;"—if the most dear enjoyment, the most beloved and useful person, turn thee out of or hinder thee in the way, "pluck it out,—cut them off, and cast them from thee." But how can we avoid giving offence to some, and being offended at others? especially, suppose they are quite in the wrong, and we see it with our own eyes? Our Lord here teaches us how: he lays down a sure method of avoiding offences and evil-speaking together. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be

established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

I. 1. First. "If thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone." The most literal way of following this first rule, where it is practicable, is the best: therefore, if thou seest with thine own eyes a brother, a fellow-Christian, commit undeniable sin, or hearest it with thine own ears, so that it is impossible for thee to doubt the fact, then thy part is plain: take the very first opportunity of going to him; and, if thou canst have access, "tell him of his fault between thee and him alone." Indeed, great care is to be taken that this is done in a right spirit, and in a right manner. The success of a reproof greatly depends on the spirit wherein it is given. Be not, therefore, wanting in earnest prayer to God, that it may be given in a lowly spirit, with a deep, piercing conviction, that it is God alone who maketh thee to differ; and if any good be done by what is now spoken, God doeth it himself. Pray that he would guard thy heart, enlighten thy mind, and direct thy tongue to such words as he may please to bless. See that thou speak in a meek as well as a lowly spirit; for the "wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." If he be "overtaken in a fault," he can no otherwise be restored than "in the spirit of meekness." If he opposes the truth, yet he cannot be brought to the knowledge thereof, but by gentleness. Still speak in a spirit of tender love, "which many waters cannot quench." If love is not conquered, it conquers all things. Who can tell the force of love?

> "Love can bow down the stubborn neck,
> The stone to flesh convert;
> Soften, and melt, and pierce, and break
> An adamantine heart."

Confirm, then, your love towards him, and you will thereby "heap coals of fire upon his head."

2. But see that the manner also wherein you speak be according to the gospel of Christ. Avoid every thing in look, gesture, word, and tone of voice, that savours of pride or self-sufficiency. Studiously avoid every thing magisterial or dogmatical, every thing that looks like arrogance or assuming. Beware of the most distant approach to disdain, overbearing, or contempt. With equal care avoid all appearance of anger; and though you use great plainness of speech, yet let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no token of any warmth, but that of love. Above all, let there be no shadow of hate or ill-will, no bitterness or sourness of expression; but use the air and language of sweetness as well as gentleness, that all may appear to flow from love in the heart. And yet this sweetness need not hinder your speaking in the most serious and solemn manner; as far as may be, in the very words of the oracles of God, (for there are none like them,) and as under the eye of Him who is coming to judge the quick and dead.

3. If you have not an opportunity of speaking to him in person, or cannot have access, you may do it by a messenger; by a common friend, in whose prudence, as well as uprightness, you can throughly confide. Such a person, speaking in your name, and in the spirit and manner above described, may answer the same end, and, in a good degree, supply your lack of service. Only beware you do not feign the want of opportunity, in order to shun the cross; neither take it for granted that you cannot have access, without ever making the trial. Whenever you can speak in your own person, it is far better. But you should rather do it by another than not at all; this way is better than none.

4. But what, if you can neither speak yourself, nor find such a messenger as you can confide in? If this be really the case, it then only remains to write. And there may be some circumstances which make this the most advisable way of speaking. One of these circumstances is, when the person with whom we have to do is of so warm and impetuous a temper as does not easily

bear reproof, especially from an equal or inferior. But it may be so introduced and softened in writing as to make it far more tolerable. Besides, many will read the very same words which they could not bear to hear. It does not give so violent a shock to their pride, nor so sensibly touch their honour. And suppose it makes little impression at first, they will, perhaps, give it a second reading, and, upon farther consideration, lay to heart what before they disregarded. If you add your name, this is nearly the same thing as going to him, and speaking in person. And this should always be done, unless it be rendered improper by some very particular reason.

5. It should be well observed, not only that this is a step which our Lord absolutely commands us to take, but that he commands us to take this step first, before we attempt any other. No alternative is allowed, no choice of any thing else; this is the way; walk thou in it. It is true, he enjoins us, if need require, to take two other steps; but they are to be taken successively after this step, and neither of them before it; much less are we to take any other step, either before or besides this. To do any thing else, or not to do this, is, therefore, equally inexcusable.

6. Do not think to excuse yourself for taking an entirely different step, by saying, "Why, I did not speak to any one, till I was so burdened that I could not refrain." You was burdened! It was no wonder you should, unless your conscience was seared; for you was under the guilt of sin, of disobeying a plain commandment of God! You ought immediately to have gone, and told "your brother of his fault, between you and him alone." If you did not, how should you be other than burdened, (unless your heart was utterly hardened,) while you was trampling the command of God under foot, and "hating your brother in your heart?" And what a way you have found to unburden yourself! God reproves you for a sin of omission, for not telling your brother of his fault.

and you comfort yourself under this reproof by a sin of commission, by telling your brother's fault to another person! Ease bought by sin is a dear purchase! I trust in God, you will have no ease, but will be burdened so much the more, till you "go to your brother and tell him," and no one else.

7. I know but of one exception to this rule: there may be a peculiar case, wherein it is necessary to accuse the guilty, though absent, in order to preserve the innocent. For instance: you are acquainted with the design which a man has against the property or life of his neighbour. Now, the case may be so circumstanced, that there is no other way of hindering that design from taking effect, but the making it known, without delay, to him against whom it is laid. In this case, therefore, this rule is set aside; as is that of the apostle, "Speak evil of no man:" and it is lawful, yea, it is our bounden duty, to speak evil of an absent person, in order to prevent his doing evil to others and himself at the same time. But remember, meanwhile, that all evil-speaking is, in its own nature, deadly poison. Therefore, if you are sometimes constrained to use it as a medicine, yet use it with fear and trembling; seeing it is so dangerous a medicine, that nothing but absolute necessity can excuse your using it at all. Accordingly, use it as seldom as possible; never but when there is such a necessity: and even then use as little of it as is possible; only so much as is necessary for the end proposed. At all other times, "go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone."

II. 1. But what "if he will not hear?" if he repay evil for good? if he be enraged, rather than convinced! What, if he hear to no purpose, and go on still in the evil of his way? We must expect this will frequently be the case; the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no effect; but the blessing we wished for another will return into our own bosom. And what are we to do then? Our Lord has given us a clear and full direction. Then "take with thee one or two more:" this is the

second step. Take one or two whom you know to be of a loving spirit, lovers of God and of their neighbour. See, likewise, that they be of a lowly spirit, and "clothed with humility." Let them also be such as are meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering; not apt to "return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." Let them be men of understanding, such as are endued with wisdom from above; and men unbiased, free from partiality, free from prejudice of any kind. Care should likewise be taken, that both the persons and their characters be well known to him: and let those that are acceptable to him be chosen preferably to any others.

2. Love will dictate the manner wherein they should proceed, according to the nature of the case. Nor can any one particular manner be prescribed for all cases. But perhaps, in general, one might advise, before they enter upon the thing itself, let them mildly and affectionately declare that they have no anger or prejudice toward him, and that it is merely from a principle of good-will that they now come, or at all concern themselves with his affairs. To make this the more apparent, they might then calmly attend to your repetition of your former conversation with him, and to what he said in his own defence, before they attempted to determine any thing. After this they would be better able to judge in what manner to proceed, "that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established;" that whatever you have said may have its full force by the additional weight of their authority.

3. In order to this, may they not, (1.) Briefly repeat what you spoke, and what he answered? (2.) Enlarge upon, open, and confirm the reasons which you had given? (3.) Give weight to your reproof, showing how just, how kind, and how seasonable it was? And lastly, enforce the advices and persuasions which you had annexed to it? And these may likewise hereafter, if need should require, bear witness of what was spoken

4. With regard to this, as well as the preceding rule, we may observe, that our Lord gives us no choice, leaves us no alternative, but expressly commands us to do this, and nothing else in the place of it. He likewise directs us when to do this; neither sooner nor later; namely, *after* we have taken the first, and *before* we have taken the third step. It is then only that we are authorized to relate the evil another has done, to those whom we desire to bear a part with us in this great instance of brotherly love. But let us have a care how we relate it to any other person, till both these steps have been taken. If we neglect to take these, or if we take any others, what wonder if we are burdened still? For we are sinners against God, and against our neighbour; and how fairly soever we may colour it, yet, if we have any conscience, our sin will find us out, and bring a burden upon our soul.

III. 1. That we may be thoroughly instructed in this weighty affair, our Lord has given us a still farther direction. "If he will not hear them," then, and not till then, "tell it to the church." This is the third step. All the question is, how this word, "the church," is here to be understood. But the very nature of the thing will determine this beyond all reasonable doubt. You cannot tell it to the national church, the whole body of men termed "the Church of England." Neither would it answer any Christian end if you could: this, therefore, is not the meaning of the word. Neither can you tell it to that whole body of people in England with whom you have a more immediate connection. Nor, indeed, would this answer any good end; the word, therefore, is not to be understood thus. It would not answer any valuable end to tell the faults of every particular member to the church, (if you would so term it,) the congregation or society, united together in London. It remains that you tell it to the elder or elders of the church, to those who are overseers of that flock of Christ to which you both belong, who watch over your

and his soul, "as they that must give account." And this should be done, if it conveniently can, in the presence of the person concerned, and, though plainly, yet with all the tenderness and love which the nature of the thing will admit. It properly belongs to their office to determine concerning the behaviour of those under their care, and to rebuke, according to the demerit of the offence, "with all authority." When, therefore, you have done this, you have done all which the word of God, or the law of love, requireth of you; you are not now partaker of his sin; but if he perish, his blood is on his own head.

2. Here, also, let it be observed, that this, and no other, is the third step which we are to take; and that we are to take it in its order after the other two; not before the second, much less the first, unless in some very particular circumstance. Indeed, in one case, the second step may coincide with this: they may be, in a manner, one and the same. The elder or elders of the church may be so connected with the offending brother that they may set aside the necessity, and supply the place, of the "one or two witnesses;" so that it may suffice to tell it to them, after you have told it to your brother, "between you and him alone."

3. When you have done this, you have delivered your own soul. "If he will not hear the church," if he persist in his sin, "let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican." You are under no obligation to think of him any more; only when you commend him to God in prayer. You need not speak of him any more, but leave him to his own Master. Indeed, you still owe to him, as to all other heathens, earnest, tender good-will. You owe him courtesy, and, as occasion offers, all the offices of humanity. But have no friendship, no familiarity with him; no other intercourse than with an open heathen

4. But if this be the rule by which Christians walk, which is the land where the Christians live? A few you may possibly find scattered up and down, who make a

conscience of observing it. But how very few! How thinly scattered upon the face of the earth! And where is there any body of men that universally walk thereby? Can we find them in Europe? or, to go no farther, in Great Britain or Ireland? I fear not: I fear we may search these kingdoms throughout, and yet search in vain. Alas for the Christian world! Alas for Protestants, for Reformed Christians! Oh, "who will rise up with me against the wicked?" "Who will take God's part" against the evil-speakers? Art thou the man? By the grace of God, wilt thou be one who art not carried away by the torrent? Art thou fully determined, God being thy helper, from this very hour to set a watch, a continual "watch, before thy mouth, and keep the door of thy lips?" From this hour wilt thou walk by this rule, "Speaking evil of no man?" If thou seest thy brother do evil, wilt thou "tell him of his fault between thee and him alone?" afterwards, "take one or two" witnesses, and then only "tell it to the church?" If this be the full purpose of thy heart, then learn one lesson well: "Hear evil of no man." If there were no hearers, there would be no speakers, of evil. And is not (according to the vulgar proverb) the receiver as bad as the thief? If, then, any begin to speak evil in thy hearing, check him immediately. Refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly; let him use ever so soft a manner, so mild an accent, ever so many professions of good-will for him whom he is stabbing in the dark, whom he smiteth under the fifth rib! Resolutely refuse to hear, though the whisperer complain of being "burdened till he speak." *Burdened!* thou fool! dost thou travail with thy cursed secret, as a woman travaileth with child? Go, then, and be delivered of thy burden in the way the Lord hath ordained! First, "go and tell thy brother of his fault between thee and him alone:" next "take with thee one or two" common friends, and tell him in their presence: if neither of these steps take effect, then "tell it to the church." But, at the peril of thy soul, tell it to no

one else, either before or after, unless in that one exempt case, when it is absolutely needful to preserve the innocent? Why shouldest thou burden another as well as thyself, by making him partaker of thy sin?

5. Oh that all you who bear the reproach of Christ, who are in derision called Methodists, would set an example to the Christian world, so called, at least in this one instance! Put ye away evil-speaking, tale-bearing, whispering: let none of them proceed out of your mouth! See that you "speak evil of no man;" of the absent, nothing but good. If ye must be distinguished, whether ye will or no, let this be the distinguishing mark of a Methodist: "He censures no man behind his back: by this fruit ye may know him." What a blessed effect of this self-denial should we quickly feel in our hearts! How would our "peace flow as a river," when we thus "followed peace with all men!" How would the love of God abound in our own souls, while we thus confirmed our love to our brethren! And what an effect would it have on all that were united together in the name of the Lord Jesus! How would brotherly love continually increase, when this grand hinderance of it was removed! All the members of Christ's mystical body would then naturally care for each other. "If one member suffered, all would suffer with it;" "if one was honoured, all would rejoice with it;" and every one would love his brother "with a pure heart fervently." Nor is this all: but what an effect might this have, even on the wild unthinking world! How soon would they descry in us, what they could not find among all the thousands of their brethren, and cry, (as Julian the apostate to his heathen courtiers,) "See how these Christians love one another!" By this chiefly would God convince the world, and prepare them also for his kingdom; as we may easily learn from those remarkable words in our Lord's last solemn prayer: "I pray for them who shall believe in me, that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee,—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." The Lord hasten

the time! The Lord enable us thus to love one another, not only "in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth," even as Christ hath loved us!

HYMNS.

I.

WHAT! never speak one evil word,
Or rash, or idle, or unkind!
Oh, how shall I, most gracious Lord,
This mark of true perfection find?

Thy sinless mind in me reveal;
Thy Spirit's plenitude impart;
And all my spotless life shall tell
The abundance of a loving heart.

Saviour, I long to testify
The fulness of thy saving grace;
Oh, might thy Spirit the blood apply
Which bought for me the sacred peace!

Forgive, and make my nature whole;
My inbred malady remove;
To perfect health restore my soul,
To perfect holiness and love.

II.

Jesus, the gift divine I know,
The gift divine I ask of thee;
That living water now bestow—
Thy Spirit and thyself, on me;
Thou, Lord, of life the fountain art;
Now let me find thee in my heart.

Thee let me drink, and thirst no more
For drops of finite happiness;
Spring up, O Well, in heavenly power,
In springs of pure, perennial peace,
In joy, that none can take away,
In life which shall for ever stay.

Father, on me the grace bestow,
Unblamable before thy sight,
Whence all the streams of mercy flow:
Mercy, thy own supreme delight,
To me, for Jesus' sake, impart,
And plant thy nature in my heart.

QUESTIONS ON SERMON XLIX.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What plain command of the great apostle is here mentioned? With what other is it compared?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Is this a common sin?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Why is it difficult to avoid it?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What makes it still more difficult to avoid it?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is said of the way to avoid this snare?

Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What ought we to do first of all? Is this commonly practiced by us? Is it *your* custom?

Ques. 7. (I. 2.) What is said of the manner of speaking?

Ques. 8. (I. 3.) If we cannot speak to the person, how then? Ought not this to be done with great caution?

Ques. 9. (I. 4.) What is said of the propriety of writing?

Ques. 10. (I. 5.) What is said of our Lord's command?

Ques. 11. (I. 6.) What excuse for evil speaking is here mentioned?

Ques. 12. (I. 7.) What exception to the rule is mentioned?

Ques. 13. (II. 1.) What shall we do when he will not hear?

Ques. 14. (II. 2.) What will love dictate in this case?

Ques. 15. (II. 3.) What course is here described?

Ques. 16. (II. 4.) What may we observe with regard to this rule?

Ques. 17. (II. 5.) What exhortation does he give to the people called Methodists?

Ques. 18. (II. 4, 5.) Did Mr. Wesley think that there were many in his day who observed this rule?

Ques. 19. (II. 4, 5.) Has not a misconception prevailed

very generally in regard to this text? *Ans.* By many persons and some Christian Churches this text is regarded as the foundation for a system of *Church discipline.* As a consequence of this mistake, it is very natural for one to suppose that the first steps taken in a case of misunderstanding of any kind between brethren when this proceeding is of a formal character, will lead to arraignment before the Church authorities. It follows that many who might be accessible to conciliatory measures are confirmed and tempted into a stubborn resistance. So far from this interpretation being correct, our Saviour evidently intended to make this course an invariable rule for the government of our lives, irrespective of any Church discipline, although, as a last resort, the Church must intervene. A homely but expressive form of putting ourselves on guard is contained in these lines:

Whene'er you would of others speak,
Of these five things beware:
To whom you speak, of whom you speak,
And when, and how, and where.

SERMON L.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

As this is at once a very difficult and a very important subject, we should examine this sermon with great care. Perhaps there has never been in modern times a man who could deal more candidly with this question than Mr. Wesley himself. He exemplified, in a long life of remarkable activity and diligence, the first great rule which he lays down as an essential part of Christian character, viz.: "Gain all you can." His industry was ceaseless. He never omitted an opportunity of employing his time profitably. He wrote books and abridged others, and by their publication he received large sums of money. No author—and as far as we know no publisher—of his time received so large an amount of money for the products of the pen. He endeavored to meet every want of every class of men. From a dictionary to a history, from a penny tract to a series of thirty volumes of books, he engaged in almost every species of laudable adventure through the printing-press. He was the first man of prominence that endeavored to *cheapen* knowledge and to bring it within the reach of people of moderate means. He was, therefore, the forerunner of the various tract societies of a later period. He understood the theory of multiplying copies of a book at a low price with small profit, yet yielding large returns in the great number issued. It is estimated that he earned in this way not less than $250,000.

But he was a practical illustration of the second rule he gives in this discourse, viz.: "Save all you can." Most

men find their *wants* multiplying as their revenue increases. On the contrary, when Mr. Wesley's income was £30, or $150 in our money, he lived upon $140 and saved $10. When his income reached $250 he still lived upon $140, and saved $110. And so, from year to year, his personal expenditures remaining at the same point, he increased the amount of his savings, and if he had stopped at this his wealth would have been considerable. But he did not stop, as so many among us do, at the point of making and saving. He had a third rule, which he considered as binding upon his conscience as the other two. This third rule, in his graphic language, was, "Give all you can." Here was the complementary principle that made his life the most complete, the most symmetrical, and the most efficient example of beneficence. He did not hoard his money to establish a "monument" for posterity to admire. He gave his money as he made it.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON L.

The context of our Lord's teaching. The importance of the subject so presented. The irrational treatment of the subject by heathen poets and orators. The important functions of money as an instrument of doing good. Hence the following rules:

I. Gain all you can. Without injury to your life, or health, or soul, or to your neighbor in body or soul. Gain all you can by honesty, industry, and good sense.

II. Save all you can. Do not waste on desires of the flesh, or the eye, or on pride; and if not on yourself, no more on your children; nor should you leave it to them to waste.

III. Give all you can. 1. Provide what is needful for yourself, conscientiously as before God. 2. For all those who depend upon you, including all in your employ. 3. Give according to good judgment all that remains to God. Remember that not a tenth, or a fifth, or a third, or a half, but *all is God's*.

SERMON L.

THE USE OF MONEY.

"I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—Luke xvi. 9.

1. Our Lord, having finished the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, which he had particularly addressed to those who murmured at his receiving publicans and sinners, adds another relation of a different kind, addressed rather to the children of God. "He said unto his disciples," not so much to the scribes and Pharisees, to whom he had been speaking before,—"There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and he was accused to him of wasting his goods. And calling him, he said, Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou canst be no longer steward." (Verses 1, 2.) After reciting the method which the bad steward used to provide against the day of necessity, our Saviour adds, "His lord commended the unjust steward;" namely, in this respect, that he used timely precaution; and subjoins this weighty reflection, "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;" (verse 8:) those who seek no other portion than this world "are wiser" (not absolutely; for they are, one and all, the veriest fools, the most egregious madmen under heaven; but, "in their generation," in their own way; they are more consistent with themselves; they are truer to their acknowledged principles; they more steadily pursue their end) "than the children of light;"—than they who see "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Then follow the

words above recited: "And I,"—the only-begotten Son of God, the Creator, Lord, and Possessor of heaven and earth, and all that is therein; the Judge of all, to whom ye are to "give an account of your stewardship," when ye "can be no longer stewards;" "I say unto you,"—Learn in this respect, even of the unjust steward, —"Make yourselves friends," by wise, timely precaution, "of the mammon of unrighteousness." "Mammon" means riches, or money. It is termed "the mammon of unrighteousness," because of the unrighteous manner wherein it is frequently procured, and wherein even that which was honestly procured is generally employed. "Make yourselves friends" of this, by doing all possible good, particularly to the children of God; "that, when ye fail,"—when ye return to dust, when ye have no more place under the sun,—those of them who are gone before "may receive you," may welcome you into "everlasting habitations."

2. An excellent branch of Christian wisdom is here inculcated by our Lord on all his followers, namely, the right use of money;—a subject largely spoken of, after their manner, by men of the world; but not sufficiently considered by those whom God hath chosen out of the world. These, generally, do not consider, as the importance of the subject requires, the use of this excellent talent. Neither do they understand how to employ it to the greatest advantage; the introduction of which into the world is one admirable instance of the wise and gracious providence of God. It has, indeed, been the manner of poets, orators, and philosophers, in almost all ages and nations, to rail at this, as the grand corrupter of the world, the bane of virtue, the pest of human society. Hence, nothing so commonly heard, as

> Nocens ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum:
> "And gold, more mischievous than keenest steel."

Hence the lamentable complaint,

Effodiuntur opes, irritamenta malorum:
"Wealth is dug up, incentive to all ill."

Nay, one celebrated writer gravely exhorts his countrymen in order to banish all vice at once, to "throw all their money into the sea;'

In mare proximum,
Summi materiem mali.

But is not all this mere empty rant? Is there any solid reason therein? By no means. For, let the world be as corrupt as it will, is gold or silver to blame? "The love of money," we know, "is the root of all evil;" but not the thing itself. The fault does not lie in the money, but in them that use it. It may be used ill: and what may not? But it may likewise be used well: it is full as applicable to the best, as to the worst uses. It is of unspeakable service to all civilized nations, in all the common affairs of life: it is a most compendious instrument of transacting all manner of business, and (if we use it according to Christian wisdom) of doing all manner of good. It is true, were man in a state of innocence, or were all men "filled with the Holy Ghost," so that, like the infant church at Jerusalem, "no man counted any thing he had his own," but "distribution was made to every one as he had need," the use of it would be superseded; as we cannot conceive there is anything of the kind among the inhabitants of heaven. But, in the present state of mankind, it is an excellent gift of God, answering the noblest ends. In the hands of his children, it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked: it gives to the traveller and the stranger where to lay his head. By it we may supply the place of a husband to the widow, and of a father to the fatherless. We may be a defence for the oppressed, a means of health to the sick, of ease to them that are in pain; it may be as eyes to the blind, as feet to the lame: yea, a lifter up from the gates of death.

3. It is therefore of the highest concern, that all who fear God know how to employ this valuable talent; that

they be instructed how it may answer these glorious ends, and in the highest degree. And, perhaps, all the instructions which are necessary for this may be reduced to three plain rules, by the exact observance whereof we may approve ourselves faithful stewards of "the mammon of unrighteousness."

I. 1. The first of these is, (he that heareth, let him understand!) "Gain all you can." Here we may speak like the children of the world: we meet them on their own ground. And it is our bounden duty to do this: we ought to gain all we can gain, without buying gold too dear, without paying more for it than it is worth. But this it is certain we ought not to do; we ought not to gain money at the expense of life, nor (which is in effect the same thing) at the expense of our health. Therefore, no gain whatsoever should induce us to enter into, or to continue in any employ, which is of such a kind, or is attended with so hard or so long labour, as to impair our constitution. Neither should we begin or continue in any business which necessarily deprives us of proper seasons for food and sleep, in such a proportion as our nature requires. Indeed, there is a great difference here. Some employments are absolutely and totally unhealthy; as those which imply the dealing much with arsenic, or other equally hurtful minerals, or the breathing an air tainted with steams of melting lead, which must at length destroy the firmest constitution. Others may not be absolutely unhealthy, but only to persons of a weak constitution. Such are those which require many hours to be spent in writing; especially if a person write sitting, and lean upon his stomach, or remain long in an uneasy posture. But whatever it is which reason or experience shows to be destructive of health or strength, that we may not submit to; seeing "the life is more" valuable "than meat, and the body than raiment:" and, if we are already engaged in such an employ, we should exchange it, as soon as possible, for some which, if it lessen our gain, will, however, not lessen our health.

2. We are, secondly, to gain all we can without hurting our mind, any more than our body. For neither may we hurt this: we must preserve, at all events, the spirit of a healthful mind. Therefore, we may not engage or continue in any sinful trade; any that is contrary to the law of God, or of our country. Such are all that necessarily imply our robbing or defrauding the king of his lawful customs. For it is, at least, as sinful to defraud the king of his right as to rob our fellow-subjects; and the king has full as much right to his customs as we have to our houses and apparel. Other businesses there are which, however innocent in themselves, cannot be followed with innocence now; at least not in England; such, for instance, as will not afford a competent maintenance without cheating or lying, or conformity to some custom which is not consistent with a good conscience: these, likewise, are sacredly to be avoided, whatever gain they may be attended with, provided we follow the custom of the trade; for, to gain money, we must not lose our souls. There are yet others which many pursue with perfect innocence, without hurting either their body or mind; and yet, perhaps, you cannot: either they may entangle you in that company which would destroy your soul; and by repeated experiments it may appear that you cannot separate the one from the other; or there may be an idiosyncrasy,—a peculiarity in your constitution of soul, (as there is in the bodily constitution of many,) by reason whereof that employment is deadly to you, which another may safely follow. So I am convinced, from many experiments, I could not study, to any degree of perfection, either mathematics, arithmetic, or algebra, without being a Deist, if not an Atheist; and yet others may study them all their lives without sustaining any inconvenience. None, therefore, can here determine for another; but every man must judge for himself, and abstain from whatever he in particular finds to be hurtful to his soul.

3. We are, thirdly, to gain all we can, without hurt-

ing our neighbour. But this we may not, cannot do, if we love our neighbour as ourselves. We cannot, if we love every one as ourselves, hurt any one *in his substance.* We cannot devour the increase of his lands, and perhaps the lands and houses themselves, by gaming, by overgrown bills, (whether on account of physic, or of law, or any thing else,) or by requiring or taking such interest as even the laws of our country forbid. Hereby all pawn-broking is excluded: seeing, whatever good we might do thereby, all unprejudiced men see with grief to be abundantly overbalanced by the evil. And if it were otherwise, yet we are not allowed to "do evil that good may come." We cannot, consistent with brotherly love, sell our goods below the market-price; we cannot study to ruin our neighbour's trade, in order to advance our own; much less can we entice away, or receive, any of his servants or workmen whom he has need of. None can gain by swallowing up his neighbour's substance, without gaining the damnation of hell!

4. Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour *in his body.* Therefore we may not sell any thing which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine; they may be of use in some bodily disorders; although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell, like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them!

The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood is there: the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art "clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day;" canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven: therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, "thy memorial shall perish with thee!"

5. And are not they partakers of the same guilt, though in a lower degree, whether surgeons, apothecaries, or physicians, who play with the lives or health of men, to enlarge their own gain? who purposely lengthen the pain or disease, which they are able to remove speedily? who protract the cure of their patient's body, in order to plunder his substance? Can any man be clear before God who does not shorten every disorder "as much as he can," and remove all sickness and pain "as soon as he can?" He cannot: for nothing can be more clear, than that he does not "love his neighbour as himself;" than that he does not "do unto others, as he would they should do unto himself."

6. This is dear-bought gain. And so is whatever is procured by hurting our neighbour *in his soul;* by ministering, suppose, either directly or indirectly, to his unchastity or intemperance; which certainly none can do who has any fear of God, or any real desire of pleasing Him. It nearly concerns all those to consider this, who have any thing to do with taverns, victualling-houses, opera-houses, play-houses, or any other places of public, fashionable diversion. If these profit the souls of men, you are clear; your employment is good, and your gain innocent: but if they are either sinful in themselves, or natural inlets to sin of various kinds, then, it is to be feared, you have a sad account to make. Oh, beware lest God say in that day, "These have perished in their iniquity, but their blood do I require at thy hands!"

7. These cautions and restrictions being observed, it is the bounden duty of all who are engaged in worldly business to observe that first and great rule of Christian wisdom, with respect to money, "Gain all you can." Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling. Lose no time. If you understand yourself, and your relation to God and man, you know you have none to spare. If you understand your particular calling, as you ought, you will have no time that hangs upon your hands. Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That wherein you are placed, if you follow it in earnest, will leave you no leisure for silly, unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do; something that will profit you, more or less. And "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Do it as soon as possible: no delay! No putting off from day to day, or from hour to hour! Never leave any thing till to-morrow, which you can do to-day. And do it as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it: put your whole strength to the work. Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a slight and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone, if it can be done by labour or patience.

8. Gain all you can by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe, how few do this; how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon *them* in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do every thing you have to do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practise whatever you learn, that you may make the best of all that is in your hands.

II. 1. Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom

and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, "Save all you can." Do not throw the precious talent into the sea: leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.

2. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent merely in gratifying the desires of the flesh; in procuring the pleasures of sense, of whatever kind; particularly, in enlarging the pleasure of tasting. I do not mean, avoid gluttony and drunkenness only: an honest heathen would condemn these. But there is a regular, reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant epicurism, which does not immediately disorder the stomach, nor (sensibly at least) impair the understanding; and yet (to mention no other effects of it now) it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off all this expense. Despise delicacy and variety, and be content with what plain nature requires.

3. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desire of the eye, by superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses; in superfluous or expensive furniture; in costly pictures, painting, gilding, books; in elegant rather than useful gardens. Let your neighbours, who know nothing better, do this: "let the dead bury their dead." But "what is that to thee?" says our Lord: "follow thou me." Are you willing? Then you are able so to do!

4. Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men. This motive of expense is frequently interwoven with one or both of the former. Men are expensive in diet, or apparel, or furniture, not barely to please their appetite, or to gratify their eye, or their imagination, but their vanity too. "So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee." So long as thou art "clothed in purple and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every

day," no doubt many will applaud thy elegance of taste, thy generosity, and hospitality. But do not buy their applause so dear. Rather be content with the honour that cometh from God.

5. Who would expend any thing in gratifying these desires, if he considered, that to gratify them is to increase them? Nothing can be more certain than this: daily experience shows, the more they are indulged, they increase the more. Whenever, therefore, you expend any thing to please your taste or other senses, you pay so much for sensuality. When you lay out money to please your eye, you give so much for an increase of curiosity,—for a stronger attachment to these pleasures which perish in the using. While you are purchasing any thing which men use to applaud, you are purchasing more vanity. Had you not then enough of vanity, sensuality, curiosity, before? Was there need of any addition? And would you pay for it too? What manner of wisdom is this? Would not the literally throwing your money into the sea be a less mischievous folly?

6. And why should you throw away money upon your children, any more than upon yourself, in delicate food, in gay or costly apparel, in superfluities of any kind? Why should you purchase for them more pride or lust, more vanity, or foolish and hurtful desires? They do not want any more; they have enough already; nature has made ample provision for them: why should you be at further expense to increase their temptations and snares, and to pierce them through with more sorrows?

7. Do not leave it to them to throw away. If you have good reason to believe they would waste what is now in your possession, in gratifying, and thereby increasing, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; at the peril of theirs and your own soul, do not set these traps in their way. Do not offer your sons or your daughters unto Belial, any more than unto Moloch. Have pity upon them, and remove out of

their way what you may easily foresee would increase their sins, and consequently plunge them deeper into everlasting perdition! How amazing then is the infatuation of those parents who think they can never leave their children enough! What! cannot you leave them enough of arrows, firebrands, and death? not enough of foolish and hurtful desires? not enough of pride, lust, ambition, vanity? not enough of everlasting burnings? Poor wretch! thou fearest where no fear is. Surely both thou and they, when ye are lifting up your eyes in hell, will have enough both of "the worm that never dieth," and of "the fire that never shall be quenched!"

8. "What then would you do, if you was in my case? if you had a considerable fortune to leave?" Whether I *would* do it or no, I know what I *ought* to do: this will admit of no reasonable question. If I had one child, elder or younger, who knew the value of money, one who, I believed, would put it to the true use, I should think it my absolute, indispensable duty to leave that child the bulk of my fortune; and to the rest just so much as would enable them to live in the manner they had been accustomed to do. "But what, if all your children were equally ignorant of the true use of money?" I ought then (hard saying! who can hear it?) to give each what would keep him above want; and to bestow all the rest in such a manner as I judged would be most for the glory of God.

III. 1. But let not any man imagine that he has done any thing, barely by going thus far, by "gaining and saving all he can," if he were to stop here. All this is nothing, if a man go not forward, if he does not point all this at a further end. Nor, indeed, can a man properly be said to save any thing, if he only lays it up. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. And you may as well bury it in the earth, as in your chest, or in the Bank of England. Not to use, is effectually to throw it away. If, therefore, you would indeed "make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," add the third rule to the two pre-

ceding. Having, first, gained all you can, and, secondly, saved all you can, then "give all you can."

2. In order to see the ground and reason of this, consider, when the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, he placed you here, not as a proprietor, but a steward: as such he intrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds; but the sole property of these still rests in him, nor can ever be alienated from him. As you yourself are not your own, but his, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. Such is your soul and your body, not your own but God's. And so is your substance in particular. And he has told you, in the most clear and express terms, how you are to employ it for him, in such a manner, that it may be all a holy sacrifice, acceptable through Christ Jesus. And this light, easy service, he hath promised to reward with an eternal weight of glory.

3. The directions which God hath given us, touching the use of our worldly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which he has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases him, first, provide things needful for yourself; food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires, for preserving the body in health and strength. Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, then "do good to them that are of the household of faith." If there be an overplus still, "as you have opportunity, do good unto all men." In so doing, you give all you can; nay, in a sound sense, all you have: for all that is laid out in this manner is really given to God. You "render unto God the things that are God's," not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household.

4. If, then, a doubt should at any time arise in your

mind concerning what you are going to expend, either on yourself or any part of your family, you have an easy way to remove it. Calmly and seriously inquire, "(1.) In extending this, am I acting according to my character? Am I acting herein, not as a proprietor, but as a steward of my Lord's goods? (2.) Am I doing this in obedience to his word? In what scripture does he require me so to do? (3.) Can I offer up this action, this expense, as a sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ? (4.) Have I reason to believe, that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the just?" You will seldom need any thing more to remove any doubt which arises on this head; but, by this fourfold consideration, you will receive clear light as to the way wherein you should go.

5. If any doubt still remain, you may further examine yourself by prayer, according to those heads of inquiry. Try whether you can say to the Searcher of hearts, your conscience not condemning you, "Lord, thou seest I am going to expend this sum on that food, apparel, furniture. And thou knowest, I act therein with a single eye, as a steward of thy goods, expending this portion of them thus, in pursuance of the design thou hadst in intrusting me with them. Thou knowest I do this in obedience to thy word, as thou commandest, and because thou commandest it. Let this, I beseech thee, be a holy sacrifice, acceptable through Jesus Christ! And give me a witness in myself, that for this labour of love I shall have a recompense when thou rewardest every man according to his works." Now, if your conscience bear you witness in the Holy Ghost, that this prayer is well-pleasing to God, then have you no reason to doubt but that expense is right and good, and such as will never make you ashamed.

6. You see, then, what it is to "make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and by what means you may procure, "that when ye fail, they may receive you into the everlasting habitations." You see the nature and extent of truly Christian prudence, so

far as it relates to the use of that great talent, money Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour, in soul or body, by applying hereto with unintermitted diligence, and with all the understanding which God has given you;—save all you can, by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire; to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; waste nothing, living or dying, on sin or folly, whether for yourself or your children;—and then, give all you can, or, in other words, give all you have, to God. Do not stint yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. Render unto God, not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less; by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all mankind, in such a manner, that you may give a good account of your stewardship, when ye can be no longer stewards; in such a manner as the oracles of God direct, both by general and particular precepts; in such a manner, that whatever ye do may be "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God," and that every act may be rewarded in that day, when the Lord cometh with all his saints.

7. Brethren, can we be either wise or faithful stewards, unless we thus manage our Lord's goods? We cannot, as not only the oracles of God, but our own conscience, beareth witness. Then why should we delay? Why should we confer any longer with flesh and blood, or men of the world? Our kingdom, our wisdom, is not of this world: heathen custom is nothing to us. We follow no men any farther than they are followers of Christ. Hear ye him: yea, to-day, while it is called to-day, hear and obey his voice! At this hour, and from this hour, do his will: fulfil his word, in this and in all things! I entreat you in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling! No more sloth! Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might! No more waste! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand! No

more covetousness! But employ whatever God has intrusted you with in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree, to the household of faith, to all men. This is no small part of "the wisdom of the just." Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you his Son, his only Son: so "laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may attain eternal life!"

QUESTIONS ON SERMON L.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) To whom was the parable of the prodigal son spoken? And why?

Ques. 2. (¶ 1.) To whom was the parable of the unjust stéward spoken?

Ques. 3. (¶ 2.) What is here inculcated by our Lord?

Ques. 4. (¶ 2.) What is here said of money?

Ques. 5. (¶ 3.) What is of great concern to all that love God?

Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What is the first rule of life? How is it limited?

Ques. 7. (I. 2.) How are we to limit the rule, secondly?

Ques. 8. (I. 3.) How is it limited, thirdly?

Ques. 9. (I. 4.) How is it limited by due regard for our neighbor? How does he treat the dram-seller?

Ques. 10. (I. 5.) What is said of physicians who play upon the lives or health of men?

Ques. 11. (I. 6.) What is such gain called?

Ques. 12. (I. 7.) Observing these limitations, what is the duty of all?

Ques. 13. (I. 8.) How else may we gain all we can?

Ques. 14. (II. 1.) What is the second rule?

Ques 15. (II. 2.) What is said of useless expenditure in gratifying the desires of the flesh?

Ques. 16. (II. 3.) And of the desire of the eye? What is here meant by this phrase?

Ques. 17. (II. 4.) What is said of the pride of life? What does that mean?

Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What is said of gratification increasing wants?

Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What is said of useless expenditure on our children?

Ques. 20 (II. 7.) What does he say about leaving money to children?

Ques. 21. (II. 8.) How does he advise the man of wealth? Does he not show the influence of current English opinion on the subject of leaving the bulk of property to one child and less to others? But how does he qualify this? Is it not a dangerous rule, even when so guarded?

Ques. 22. (III. 1.) What further rule is laid down?

Ques. 23. (III. 2.) What is the ground or reason of this?

Ques. 24. (III. 3.) In what particulars are the divine directions given?

Ques. 25. (III. 4.) How may certain doubts be removed?

Ques. 26. (III. 5.) What if doubts still remain?

Ques. 27. (III. 6.) How does he sum up the argument?

Ques. 28. (III. 7.) What question is here asked? How answered?

Ques. 29. (III. 7.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON LI.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

In this discourse on "The Good Steward" Mr. Wesley has collected and brought to a focal point all the maxims which he laid down in the sermon on "The Use of Money." By a careful study of the sermon the reader will see that the philosophy of life here inculcated, however rare may be the cases in which it is reduced to practice, is neither more nor less than the system taught in the Bible. It is so fully in agreement with our sense of the fitness of things as they ought to be that no one will attempt to argue in opposition to any proposition contained in this discourse. Man is *not* proprietor of the world, although his Creator ordained him to have dominion over it. If sin had never entered we may fancy a world of wonderful perfections, but even in a sinless state man would have been only a viceroy, holding his authority over the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms as a trust, whereby the glory and majesty of the true Lord and King would have been declared to the intelligent universe.

But man in his fallen estate is inclined to regard himself as the true owner and sovereign proprietor of whatever by diligence, craft, or accident of birth he may become possessed. Nevertheless, reason teaches him that, although he may possess millions of gold and silver, he must die and leave all his wealth to others. Neither land nor houses can he take with him, and as he comes naked into the world he can carry nothing out of it.

Not only so, but we are constantly reminded of the folly

of those who profess to be the children of God; who say in words that they are strangers and pilgrims here, and that they seek a city that is out of sight, and yet are constantly planning to add field to field, and house to house, and thousands of gold and silver to the wealth already acquired. Where shall we find the good steward? The man in the parable, seeing his office about to be taken from him, applied himself by distributing his employer's goods to the use of those who owed his master, hoping thereby to bring these debtors under obligation to himself, that he might have home and friends in the day of his adversity. How forcible is our Lord's illustration! The unjust steward wasted his lord's goods, but his shrewdness and dishonesty purchased a debt of gratitude to be paid by the lord's debtors hereafter. On the other hand, by distributing to the needy and by sharing the gifts of God with those who have a just claim upon us, we at once please the Lord of all and send our deeds of mercy to witness for us when we come to need the "everlasting habitations."

ANALYSIS OF SERMON LI.

The suitability of this representation of the relation of man to God.

I. In what respects are we God's stewards? The steward is not a proprietor, but only in trust with goods to be used under the Master's direction. God hath made us stewards.

II. The short and uncertain duration of our charge. Death dispossesses us of worldly goods, of our bodies with all their faculties, of many mixed talents; and though our souls continue, our stewardship of them has ceased.

III. The account to be rendered. Once for all, at the general judgment. Particularly, of all that hath been committed to our trust. Followed by eternal sentence.

IV. Hence we learn: The preciousness of time. That no work of life is indifferent. That there can be no works of supererogation. That we should walk in wisdom and fear.

SERMON LI.

THE GOOD STEWARD.

"*Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.*"—LUKE xvi. 2.

1. THE relation which man bears to God, the creature to his Creator, is exhibited to us in the oracles of God under various representations. Considered as a sinner, a fallen creature, he is there represented as a debtor to his Creator. He is also frequently represented as a servant, which indeed is essential to him as a creature; insomuch that this appellation is given to the Son of God when in his state of humiliation: he "took upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

2. But no character more exactly agrees with the present state of man, than that of a steward. Our blessed Lord frequently represents him as such; and there is a peculiar propriety in the representation. It is only in one particular respect, namely, as he is a sinner, that he is styled a debtor; and when he is styled a servant, the appellation is general and indeterminate: but a steward is a servant of a particular kind; such a one as man is in all respects. This appellation is exactly expressive of his situation in the present world; specifying what kind of servant he is to God, and what kind of service his Divine Master expects from him.

It may be of use, then, to consider this point throughly, and to make our full improvement of it. In order to this, let us, first, inquire, in what respects we are now God's stewards. Let us, secondly, observe, that when he requires our souls of us, we "can be no

.onger stewards." It will then only remain, as we may, in the third place, observe, to "give an account of our stewardship."

I. 1. And, first, we are to inquire, in what respects we are now God's stewards. We are now indebted to Him for all we have: but although a debtor is obliged to return what he has received, yet until the time of payment comes, he is at liberty to use it as he pleases. It is not so with a steward; he is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as *he* pleases, but as his master pleases. He has no right to dispose of any thing which is in his hands, but according to the will of his lord. For he is not the proprietor of any of these things, but barely intrusted with them by another; and intrusted on this express condition,—that he shall dispose of all as his master orders. Now, this is exactly the case of every man, with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what he has lodged in our hands as *we* please, but as He pleases who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth, and the Lord of every creature. We have no right to dispose of any thing we have, but according to his will, seeing we are not proprietors of any of these things; they are all, as our Lord speaks, αλλοτρια, *belonging to another person;* nor is any thing properly our *own*, in the land of our pilgrimage. We shall not receive τα ιδια, *our own things*, till we come to our own country. Eternal things only are our own: with all these temporal things we are barely intrusted by another, the Disposer and Lord of all. And he intrusts us with them on this express condition,—that we use them only as our Master's goods, and according to the particular directions which he has given us in his word.

2. On this condition he hath intrusted us with our souls, our bodies, our goods, and whatever other talents we have received: but in order to impress this weighty truth on our hearts, it will be needful to come to particulars.

And, first, God has intrusted us with our soul, an immortal spirit, made in the image of God; together

with all the powers and faculties thereof, understanding, imagination, memory, will, and a train of affections, either included in it, or closely dependent upon it,—love and hatred, joy and sorrow, respecting present good and evil,—desire and aversion, hope and fear, respecting that which is to come. All these St. Paul seems to include in two words, when we say, "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds." Perhaps, indeed, the latter word, νοηματα, might rather be rendered *thoughts*, provided we take that word in its most extensive sense, for every perception of the mind, whether active or passive.

3. Now, of all these, it is certain, we are only stewards. God has intrusted us with these powers and faculties, not that we may employ them according to our own will, but according to the express orders which he has given us; although it is true that, in doing His will, we most effectually secure our own happiness; seeing it is herein only that we can be happy, either in time or in eternity. Thus we are to use our understanding, our imagination, our memory, wholly to the glory of Him that gave them. Thus our will is to be wholly given up to him, and all our affections to be regulated as He directs. We are to love and hate, to rejoice and grieve, to desire and shun, to hope and fear, according to the rule which he prescribes whose we are, and whom we are to serve in all things. Even our thoughts are not our own, in this sense; they are not at our own disposal; but for every deliberate motion of our mind we are accountable to our great Master.

4. God has, secondly, intrusted us with our bodies, (those exquisitely wrought machines, so "fearfully and wonderfully made,") with all the powers and members thereof. He has intrusted us with the organs of sense; of sight, hearing, and the rest: but none of these are given us as our own, to be employed according to our own will. None of these are lent us in such a sense as to leave us at liberty to use them as we please for a season. No: we have received them on these very terms,—

that as long as they abide with us, we should employ them all in that very manner, and no other, which He appoints.

5. It is on the same terms that he imparted to us that most excellent talent of speech. "Thou hast given me a tongue," says the ancient writer, "that I may praise thee therewith." For this purpose was it given to all the children of men,—to be employed in glorifying God. Nothing, therefore, is more ungrateful or more absurd, than to think or say, "Our tongues are our own." That cannot be, unless we have created ourselves, and so are independent on the Most High. Nay, but "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves:" the manifest consequence is, that he is still Lord over us, in this as in all other respects. It follows, that there is not a word of our tongue for which we are not accountable to him.

6. To him we are equally accountable for the use of our hands and feet, and all the members of our body These are so many talents which are committed to our trust, until the time appointed by the Father. Until then, we have the use of all these; but as stewards, not as proprietors; to the end we should "render them, not as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God."

7. God has intrusted us, thirdly, with a portion of worldly goods; with food to eat, raiment to put on, and a place where to lay our head; with not only the necessaries, but the conveniences of life. Above all he has committed to our charge that precious talent which contains all the rest,—money: indeed it is unspeakably precious, if we are wise and faithful stewards of it; if we employ every part of it for such purposes as our blessed Lord has commanded us to do.

8. God has intrusted us, fourthly, with several talents which do not properly come under any of these heads Such is bodily strength; such are health, a pleasing person, an agreeable address; such are learning and knowledge, in their various degrees, with all the other

advantages of education. Such is the influence which we have over others, whether by their love and esteem of us, or by power; power to do them good or hurt, to help or hinder them in the circumstances of life. Add to these, that invaluable talent of time with which God intrusts us from moment to moment. Add, lastly, that on which all the rest depend, and without which they would all be curses, not blessings; namely, the grace of God, the power of his Holy Spirit, which alone worketh in us all that is acceptable in his sight.

II. 1. In so many respects are the children of men stewards of the Lord, the Possessor of heaven and earth: so large a portion of his goods, of various kinds, hath he committed to their charge. But it is not for ever, nor indeed for any considerable time: we have this trust reposed in us only during the short, uncertain space that we sojourn here below; only so long as we remain on earth, as this fleeting breath is in our nostrils. The hour is swiftly approaching, it is just at hand, when we "can be no longer stewards!" The moment the body "returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it," we bear that character no more; the time of our stewardship is at an end. Part of those goods wherewith we were before intrusted are now to come to an end; at least they are so with regard to *us;* nor are we longer intrusted with them: and that part which remains can no longer be employed or improved as it was before.

2. Part of what we were intrusted with before is at an end, at least with regard to us. What have we to do, after this life, with food, and raiment, and houses, and earthly possessions? The food of the dead is the dust of the earth; they are clothed only with worms and rottenness. They dwell in the house prepared for all flesh: their lands know them no more: all their worldly goods are delivered into other hands, and they have "no more portion under the sun."

3. The case is the same with regard to the body. The moment the spirit returns to God, we are no

longer stewards of this machine, which is then sown in corruption and dishonour. All the parts and members of which it was composed lie mouldering in the clay. The hands have no longer power to move; the feet have forgotten their office; the flesh, sinews, and bones, are all hastening to be dissolved into common dust.

4. Here end also the talents of a mixed nature; our strength, our health, our beauty, our eloquence, and address; our faculty of pleasing, or persuading, or convincing others. Here end, likewise, all the honours we once enjoyed, all the power which was lodged in our hands, all the influence which we once had over others, either by the love or the esteem which they bore us. Our love, our hatred, our desire, is perished: none regard how we were once affected toward them. They look upon the dead as neither able to help nor hurt them; so that "a living dog is better than a dead lion."

5. Perhaps a doubt may remain concerning some of the other talents wherewith we are now intrusted, whether they will cease to exist when the body returns to dust, or only cease to be improvable. Indeed, there is no doubt but the kind of speech which we now use, by means of these bodily organs, will then be entirely at an end, when those organs are destroyed. It is certain the tongue will no more occasion any vibrations in the air; neither will the ear convey these tremulous motions to the common sensory. Even the *sonus exilis*, the low, shrill voice, which the poet supposes to belong to a separate spirit, we cannot allow to have a real being; it is a mere flight of imagination. Indeed, it cannot be questioned, but separate spirits have some way to communicate their sentiments to each other; but what inhabitant of flesh and blood can explain that way? What we term "speech," they cannot have: so that we can no longer be stewards of this talent when we are numbered with the dead.

6. It may likewise admit of a doubt, whether our senses will exist, when the organs of sense are destroyed

Is it not probable, that those of the lower kind will cease,—the feeling, the smell, the taste,—as they have a more immediate reference to the body, and are chiefly, if not wholly, intended for the preservation of it? But will not some kind of sight remain, although the eye be closed in death? And will there not be something in the soul equivalent to the present sense of hearing? Nay, is it not probable, that these will not only exist in the separate state, but exist in a far greater degree, in a more eminent manner, than now, when the soul, disentangled from its clay, is no longer "a dying sparkle in a cloudy place;" when it no longer "looks through the windows of the eye and ear;" but rather is all eye, all ear, all sense, in a manner we cannot yet conceive? And have we not a clear proof of the possibility of this, of seeing without the use of the eye, and hearing without the use of the ear? yea, and an earnest of it continually? For does not the soul see, in the clearest manner, when the eye is of no use; namely, in dreams? Does she not then enjoy the faculty of hearing, without any help from the ear? But however this be, certain it is, that neither will our senses, any more than our speech, be intrusted to us in the manner they are now, when the body lies in the silent grave.

7. How far the knowledge or learning which we have gained by education will then remain, we cannot tell. Solomon indeed says, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." But it is evident, these words cannot be understood in an absolute sense. For it is so far from being true that there is no knowledge after we have quitted the body, that the doubt lies on the other side, whether there be any such thing as real knowledge till then; whether it be not a plain sober truth, not a mere poetical fiction, that

> "All these shadows, which for things we take,
> Are but the empty dreams, which in death's sleep we make;"

only excepting those things which God himself has been pleased to reveal to man. I will speak for one. After

having sought for truth, with some diligence, for half a century, I am, at this day, hardly sure of any thing but what I learn from the Bible. Nay, I positively affirm, I know nothing else so certainly, that I would dare to stake my salvation upon it.

So much, however, we may learn from Solomon's words, that "there is no" such "knowledge or wisdom in the grave," as will be of any use to an unhappy spirit; "there is no device" there, whereby he can now improve those talents with which he was once intrusted. For time is no more; the time of our trial for everlasting happiness or misery is past. Our day, the day of man, is over; the day of salvation is ended! Nothing now remains but "the day of the Lord," ushering in wide, unchangeable eternity!

8. But still, our souls, being incorruptible and immortal, of a nature "little lower than the angels," (ever if we are to understand that phrase of our original nature, which may well admit of a doubt,) when our bodies are mouldered into earth, will remain with all their faculties. Our memory, our understanding, will be so far from being destroyed, yea, or impaired, by the dissolution of the body, that, on the contrary, we have reason to believe, they will be inconceivably strengthened. Have we not the clearest reason to believe, that they will then be wholly freed from those defects which now naturally result from the union of the soul with the corruptible body? It is highly probable, that, from the time these are disunited, our memory will let nothing slip; yea, that it will faithfully exhibit every thing to our view, which was ever committed to it. It is true, that the invisible world is, in Scripture, termed "the land of forgetfulness;" or, as it is still more strongly expressed in the old translation, "the land where all things are forgotten." They are forgotten; but by whom? Not by the inhabitants of that land, but by the inhabitants of the earth. It is with regard to them that the unseen world "is the land of forgetfulness." All things therein are too frequently

forgotten by these; but not by disimbodied spirits From the time they have put off the earthly tabernacle, we can hardly think they forget any thing.

9. In like manner, the understanding will, doubtless, be freed from the defects that are now inseparable from it. For many ages it has been an unquestioned maxim, *Humanum est errare et nescire;*—Ignorance and mistake are inseparable from human nature. But the whole of this assertion is only true with regard to living men; and holds no longer than while "the corruptible body presses down the soul." Ignorance, indeed, belongs to every finite understanding; (seeing there is none beside God that knoweth all things;) but not mistake: when the body is laid aside, this also is laid aside for ever.

10 What then can we say of an ingenious man, who has lately made a discovery, that disimbodied spirits have not only no senses, (not even sight or hearing,) but no memory nor understanding; no thought or perception; not so much as a consciousness of their own existence! that they are in a dead sleep from death to the resurrection! *Consanguineus lethi sopor* indeed! Such a sleep we may call "a near kinsman of death," if it be not the same thing. What can we say, but that ingenious men have strange dreams; and these they sometimes mistake for realities!

11. But to return. As the soul will retain its understanding and memory, notwithstanding the dissolution of the body, so undoubtedly the will, including all the affections, will remain in its full vigour. If our love or anger, our hope or desire, perish, it is only with regard to those whom we leave behind. To them it matters not, whether they were the objects of our love or hate, of our desire or aversion. But in separate spirits themselves, we have no reason to believe that any of these are extinguished. It is more probable, that they work with far greater force, than while the soul was clogged with flesh and blood.

12. But although all these, although both our knowledge and senses, our memory and understanding, toge

ther with our will, our love, hate, and all our affections, remain after the body is dropped off; yet, in this respect, they are as though they were not,—we are no longer stewards of them. The things continue, but our stewardship does not: we no more act in that capacity Even the grace which was formerly intrusted with us, in order to enable us to be faithful and wise stewards, is now no longer intrusted for that purpose. The days of our stewardship are ended.

III. 1. It now remains, that, being no longer stewards, we give an account of our stewardship. Some have imagined, this is to be done immediately after death, as soon as we enter into the world of spirits. Nay, the Church of Rome does absolutely assert this; yea, makes it an article of faith. And thus much we may allow, the moment a soul drops the body, and stands naked before God, it cannot but know what its portion will be to all eternity. It will have full in its view, either everlasting joy, or everlasting torment; as it is no longer possible for us to be deceived in the judgment which we pass upon ourselves. But the Scripture gives us no reason to believe that God will then sit in judgment upon us. There is no passage in all the oracles of God which affirms any such thing. That which has been frequently alleged for this purpose, seems rather to prove the contrary; namely, Heb. ix. 27, "It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgment;" for, in all reason, the word "once" is here to be applied to judgment as well as death. So that the fair inference to be drawn from this very text is, not that there are two judgments, a particular and a general; but that we are to be judged, as well as to die, once only: not once immediately after death, and again after the general resurrection; but then only "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him." The imagination therefore of one judgment at death, and another at the end of the world, can have no place with those who make the written word of God the whole and sole standard of their faith.

2. The time, then, when we are to give this account is when the "great white throne comes down from heaven, and He that sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them." It is then "the dead, small and great, will stand before God; and the books will be opened:" the book of Scripture, to them who were intrusted therewith; the book of conscience, to all mankind. The "book of remembrance," likewise, (to use another scriptural expression,) which had been writing from the foundation of the world, will then be laid open to the view of all the children of men. Before all these, even the whole human race, before the devil and his angels, before an innumerable company of holy angels, and before God the Judge of all, thou wilt appear, without any shelter or covering, without any possibility of disguise, to give a particular account of the manner wherein thou hast employed all thy Lord's goods!

3. The Judge of all will then inquire, "How didst thou employ thy soul? I intrusted thee with an immortal spirit, endowed with various powers and faculties, with understanding, imagination, memory, will, affections. I gave thee withal full and express directions, how all these were to be employed? Didst thou employ thy understanding, as far as it was capable, according to those directions; namely, in the knowledge of thyself and me?—my nature, my attributes?—my works; whether of creation, of providence, or of grace?—in acquainting thyself with my word?—in using every means to increase thy knowledge thereof?—in meditating thereon day and night? Didst thou employ thy memory according to my will, in treasuring up whatever knowledge thou hadst acquired which might conduce to my glory, to thy own salvation, or the advantage of others? Didst thou store up therein, not things of no value, but whatever instruction thou hadst learned from my word; and whatever experience thou hadst gained of my wisdom, truth, power, and mercy? Was thy

imagination employed, not in painting vain images, much less such as nourished 'foolish and hurtful desires;' but in representing to thee whatever would profit thy soul, and awaken thy pursuit of wisdom and holiness? Didst thou follow my directions with regard to thy will? Was it wholly given up to me? Was it swallowed up in mine, so as never to oppose, but always run parallel with it? Were thy affections placed and regulated in such a manner as I appointed in my word? Didst thou give me thy heart? Didst thou not love the world, neither the things of the world? Was I the object of thy love? Was all thy desire unto me, and unto the remembrance of my name? Was I the joy of thy heart, the delight of thy soul, the chief among ten thousand? Didst thou sorrow for nothing, but what grieved my Spirit? Didst thou fear and hate nothing but sin? Did the whole stream of thy affections flow back to the ocean from whence they came? Were thy thoughts employed according to my will?—not in ranging to the ends of the earth, not on folly, or sin; but on 'whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were holy;' on whatsoever was conducive to my glory, and to 'peace and good-will among men?'"

4. Thy Lord will then inquire, "How didst thou employ the body wherewith I intrusted thee? I gave thee a tongue to praise me therewith; didst thou use it to the end for which it was given? Didst thou employ it, not in evil-speaking or idle-speaking, not in uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; but in such as was good, as was necessary or useful either to thyself or others? such as always tended, directly or indirectly, to 'minister grace to the hearers?' I gave thee, together with thy other senses, those grand avenues of knowledge, sight and hearing: were these employed to those excellent purposes for which they were bestowed upon thee? in bringing thee in more and more instruction in righteousness and true holiness? I gave thee hands and feet, and various members, wherewith to perform the works which were prepared for thee: were they em-

ployed, not in doing 'the will of the flesh,' of thy evil nature; or the will of the mind; (the things to which thy reason or fancy led thee;) but 'the will of him that sent' thee into the world, merely to work out thy own salvation? Didst thou present all thy members, not to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but to me alone, through the Son of my love, 'as instruments of righteousness?'"

5. The Lord of all will next inquire, "How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands? Didst thou use thy food, not so as to seek or place thy happiness therein, but so as to preserve the body in health, in strength, and vigour, a fit instrument for the soul? Didst thou use apparel, not to nourish pride or vanity, much less to tempt others to sin, but conveniently and decently to defend thyself from the injuries of the weather? Didst thou prepare and use thy house, and all other conveniences, with a single eye to my glory? in every point seeking not thy own honour, but mine; studying to please, not thyself, but me? Once more: in what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent, money? not in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life? not squandering it away in vain expenses,—the same as throwing it into the sea? not hoarding it up to leave behind thee,—the same as burying it in the earth? but first supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of thy family; then restoring the remainder to me through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive it; looking upon thyself as only one of that number of poor, whose wants were to be supplied out of that part of my substance which I had placed in thy hands for this purpose; leaving thee the right of being supplied first, and the blessedness of giving rather than receiving? Wast thou, accordingly, a general benefactor to mankind? feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, assisting the stranger, relieving the afflicted, according to their various necessities? Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame? a father to the father-

less, and a husband to the widow? And didst thou labour to improve all outward works of mercy, as means of saving souls from death?"

6 Thy Lord will further inquire, "Hast thou been a wise and faithful steward with regard to the talents of a mixed nature which I lent thee? Didst thou employ thy health and strength, not in folly or sin, not in the pleasures which perished in the using, 'not in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires thereof;' but in a vigorous pursuit of that better part which none could take away from thee? Didst thou employ whatever was pleasing in thy person or address, whatever advantages thou hadst by education, whatever share of learning, whatever knowledge of things or men, was committed to thee for the promoting of virtue in the world, for the enlargement of my kingdom? Didst thou employ whatever share of power thou hadst, whatever influence over others, by the love or esteem of thee which they had conceived, for the increase of their wisdom and holiness? Didst thou employ that inestimable talent of time, with wariness and circumspection, as duly weighing the value of every moment and knowing that all were numbered in eternity? Above all, wast thou a good steward of my grace, preventing, accompanying, and following thee? Didst thou duly observe, and carefully improve, all the influences of my Spirit? every good desire? every measure of light? all his sharp or gentle reproofs? How didst thou profit by 'the spirit of bondage and fear,' which was previous to 'the Spirit of adoption?' And when thou wast made a partaker of his Spirit, crying in thy heart, 'Abba, Father,' didst thou stand fast in the glorious liberty wherewith I made thee free? Didst thou from thenceforth present thy soul and body, all thy thoughts, thy words, and actions, in one flame of love, as a holy sacrifice, glorifying me with thy body and thy spirit? Then 'well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'"

And what will remain, either to the faithful or un-

faithful steward? Nothing but the execution of that sentence which has been passed by the righteous Judge; fixing thee in a state which admits of no change through everlasting ages! It remains only that thou be rewarded, to all eternity, according to thy works.

IV. 1. From these plain considerations we may learn, first, How important is this short, uncertain day of life! How precious, above all utterance, above all conception, is every portion of it!

> "The least of these a serious care demands;
> For though they're little, they are golden sands!"

How deeply does it concern every child of man, to let none of these run to waste; but to improve them all to the noblest purposes, as long as the breath of God is in his nostrils!

2. We learn from hence, secondly, that there is no employment of our time, no action or conversation, that is purely indifferent. All is good or bad, because all our time, as every thing we have, is not our own. All these are, as our Lord speaks, τα αλλοτρια,—*the property of another;* of God our Creator. Now, these either are, or are not employed according to his will. If they are so employed, all is good; if they are not, all is evil. Again: it is his will, that we should continually grow in grace, and in the living knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, every thought, word, and work, whereby this knowledge is increased, whereby we grow in grace, is good; and every one whereby this knowledge is not increased, is truly and properly evil.

3. We learn from hence, thirdly, that there are no works of supererogation; that we can never do more than our duty; seeing all we have is not our own, but God's; all we can do is due to him. We have not received this or that, or many things only, but every thing from him: therefore, every thing is his due. He that gives us all, must needs have a right to all; so that if we pay him any thing less than all, we cannot be faithful stewards

And considering, "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour," we cannot be wise stewards unless we labour to the uttermost of our power; not leaving any thing undone which we possibly can do, but putting forth all our strength.

4. Brethren, "who is an understanding man and endued with knowledge among you?" Let him show the wisdom from above, by walking suitably to his character. If he so account of himself, as a steward of the manifold gifts of God, let him see that all his thoughts, and words, and works be agreeable to the post God has assigned him. It is no small thing, to lay out for God all which you have received from God. It requires all your wisdom, all your resolution, all your patience and constancy;—far more than ever you had by nature; but not more than you may have by grace. For his grace is sufficient for you; and "all things," you know, "are possible to him that believeth." By faith, then, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ;" "put on the whole armour of God;" and you shall be enabled to glorify him in all your words and works: yea, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ!

EDINBURGH, *May* 14, 1768.

LI

QUESTIONS ON SERMON LI.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What relation does man bear to God? How is it exhibited to us?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What character exactly agrees with the present state of man?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What do we first inquire?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) What has God intrusted to us? On what condition?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) What is certain?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) What has God intrusted us with, secondly?

Ques. 7. (I. 5.) What is imparted to us on the same terms?

Ques. 8. (I. 6.) For what else are we equally accountable?

Ques. 9. (I. 7.) What has been intrusted, thirdly?

Ques. 10. (I. 8.) What, in the fourth place?

Ques. 11. (II. 1.) What is said of the duration of these trusts?

Ques. 12. (II. 2.) What is said of food, raiment, etc.?

Ques. 13. (II. 3.) What, also, of the body?

Ques. 14. (II. 4.) What of the talents of a mixed nature?

Ques. 15. (II. 5.) Concerning what does a doubt remain?

Ques. 16. (II. 6.) What is said of the organs of sense?

Ques. 17. (II. 7.) What of knowledge or learning?

Ques. 18. (II. 8.) What is said of our souls after death?

Ques. 19. (II. 9.) What is said of the understanding?

Ques. 20. (II. 10.) What does Mr. Wesley say of the conjectures of an ingenious man? Do you know of any sect who profess the same belief? *Ans.* A small party in this country call themselves "Soul Sleepers." It is a revival of an ancient dogma.

Ques. 21. (II. 11.) What is said of the will after death?

Ques. 22. (II. 12.) What is said of the end of our stewardship?

Ques. 23. (III. 1.) What remains, then, after death?

Ques. 24. (III. 2.) When is the account to be given?

Ques. 25. (III. 3.) What will the Judge of all inquire?

Ques. 26. (III. 4.) What will he next inquire?

Ques. 27. (III. 5.) What will he inquire, further?

Ques. 28. (III. 6.) What further inquiry will he make?

Ques. 29. (IV. 1.) What do we learn from these considerations, first?

Ques. 30. (IV. 2.) What may we learn, secondly?

Ques. 31. (IV. 3.) What do we learn, thirdly?

Ques. 32. (IV. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

Ques. 33. When and where was this sermon written?

SERMON LII.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

This discourse presents a subject of historical interest in so far as it relates to England alone. But it would not be entitled to a place among our Methodist "Standards" if it contained no principles of perpetual value and universal application. In the time of the English Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, the civil government became obnoxious to the people at large, not only because of its exercising the powers of a monarchy whilst it denied the name, but because of the tendency toward the centralization of all authority and power in the hands of the civil rulers. The effort to make the people religious by act of Parliament produced a great deal of hypocrisy on the one hand and disaffection on the other. Sumptuary laws, interfering with the private lives of the citizens, whilst they created the *appearance* of piety, left the real standards of morality where they found them.

The legal restrictions and religio-political formulas of the Commonwealth which had become burdensome to the people at large were all swept away by the restoration of Charles II. in 1660. The rebound of the nation from the extreme of austerity in life and manners was so great that there seemed to be a cause for alarm lest the Church and religion would be overwhelmed by the dissolute and licentious manners of the age. The example of an immoral king and a debauched court was everywhere manifest. The Revolution in 1688 and the purity and integrity of the new monarch, William III., succeeded in some measure in ar-

resting these evil tendencies. Under Queen Anne there was no great improvement, and when the House of Hanover came to the throne in 1715 they brought the vices of a corrupt German court to encourage and sustain the wantonness of English public life. There was little improvement, either in the political morality of statesmen or the private lives of noblemen and party leaders, until the time of George III. This king, stubborn and wrong-headed in his political career, was a man of pure morals, and his influence was exercised in behalf of all that tended to elevate and refine the manners of his people.

It was in the year 1757 that the Society for the Reformation of Manners was revived, as stated by Mr. Wesley. These societies were organized in the time of King William, and were of great service in forming a high standard of public opinion on moral questions. The permanent principles represented in this discourse will be observed by the student. Whilst civil laws cannot compel men to be pure and upright in heart, they can prevent them from openly showing contempt for virtue and religion. Governments have the right to enforce a due observance of the Sabbath-day. They can, and should, prevent men from interfering with the worship of God. They can, and should, enforce obedience to the moral sentiments of the great majority of a Christian nation. It is in this point of view that this discourse becomes a permanent part of our doctrinal standards.

There is a strong tendency at the present time toward a liberality of sentiment which cannot be distinguished from latitudinarianism. The Constitution of the United States forbids any established form of religion. Therefore no system of religious faith can claim protection under the Constitution. Because the vast majority are Christians, and have consented to allow the Hebrews to worship God according to the convictions of their consciences, therefore the Christians must not claim the Christian religion as the faith of the country for fear of offending Hebrew prejudices. This

is the force of the argument. This course of reasoning would result in the destruction of the Christian religion in the United States. We *are* a Christian people, and because of the enlightened Christian spirit prevailing among us we have proclaimed to the world that all men are here free to worship the true God in any way that seems best to them. But in granting liberty to others we have not destroyed our own freedom. The sanctity of the Christian Sabbath must not be broken simply because a small sect or party call themselves Hebrews, or Seventh Day Baptists, or Second Adventists. It is absurd to require nine-tenths of any community to yield their religious convictions out of respect to the prejudices of one-tenth. The sophistry which makes and sustains this plea has but one motive and but one tendency—the ultimate overthrow of the Christian religion and the introduction of a series of evils which must speedily produce a social and moral ruin. In view of these important interests, it is highly expedient to examine this discourse carefully and thoroughly. In the city of Paris, where all kinds of business pursuits are followed on the Sabbath-day, a placard is occasionally seen, printed in French and English, "This establishment is not opened on Sunday." We know at once that this is an English or French Protestant who has the courage to face the customs of the country and to observe the Sabbath as a religious duty. As Protestants are compelled to sacrifice their business interests by declining a traffic which they believe to be sinful, so also Romanists and others must observe the legal ordinances in the country to which they are indebted for home, liberty, and property. There is no plea of violation of conscience, so far as these persons are concerned. If any one chooses to repudiate the Christian Sabbath, and prefers to observe the Jewish seventh day, he may do so, but he must observe the first day of the week, the Christian Sabbath, as a part of our common heritage and an essential feature of American civilization.

ANALYSIS OF SERMON LII.

After speaking of the importance of combination and organization in all good works, Mr. Wesley—

I. Recites the history of this Society.

II. He shows the excellency of their design. This is to make an open stand against ungodliness and unrighteousness, thus: (1) Preventing dishonor to God's name; (2) promoting the good of the victims of sin; and (3) of the entire community.

It is objected that this is not our concern, but that of the officers of the law. But they need to be stirred up to their duty. That the design is impracticable. Not with God. That this is not the way to reform sinners. It at least does outward good, and very much good has been done.

III. What manner of men should these be? Not merely rich, or numerous, or harmless. But men of faith, courage, patience, steadiness, love, and meekness.

IV. It should be pursued with a single motive to the glory of God and the good of man; in the spirit described above; in simplicity, prudence, and without triumph over the sinner.

V. Exhortation and advice to the members of the Society.

SERMON LII.

THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS.

PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR REFORMATION OF MANNERS, ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1763, AT THE CHAPEL IN WEST-STREET, SEVEN-DIALS.

"*Who will rise up with me against the wicked?*"—PSALM xciv. 16

1. IN all ages, men who neither feared God nor regarded man have combined together, and formed confederacies, to carry on the works of darkness. And herein they have shown themselves wise in their generation; for by this means they more effectually promoted the kingdom of their father, the devil, than otherwise they could have done. On the other hand, men who did fear God, and desire the happiness of their fellow-creatures, have, in every age, found it needful to join together, in order to oppose the works of darkness, to spread the knowledge of God their Saviour, and to promote his kingdom upon earth. Indeed, he himself has instructed them so to do. From the time that men were upon the earth, he hath taught them to join together in his service, and has united them in one body by one Spirit. And for this very end he has joined them together, "that he might destroy the works of the devil;" first in them that are already united, and by them in all that are round about them.

2. This is the original design of the church of Christ. It is a body of men compacted together, in order, first, to save each his own soul; then to assist each other in working out their salvation; and, afterwards, as far as

in them lies, to save all men from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ. And this ought to be the continued care and endeavour of every member of his church; otherwise he is not worthy to be called a member thereof, as he is not a living member of Christ.

3. Accordingly, this ought to be the constant care and endeavour of all those who are united together in these kingdoms, and are commonly called, *the Church of England*. They are united together for this very end, to oppose the devil and all his works, and to wage war against the world and the flesh, his constant and faithful allies. But do they, in fact, answer the end of their union? Are all who style themselves "members of the Church of England" heartily engaged in opposing the works of the devil, and fighting against the world and the flesh? Alas! we cannot say this. So far from it, that a great part, I fear the greater part of them, are themselves *the world*,—the people that know not God to any saving purpose; are indulging, day by day, instead of "mortifying the flesh, with its affections and desires;" and doing, themselves, those works of the devil, which they are peculiarly engaged to destroy.

4. There is, therefore, still need, even in this Christian country, (as we *courteously* style Great Britain,) yea, in this Christian church, (if we may give that title to the bulk of our nation,) of some to "rise up against the wicked," and join together "against the evil-doers." Nay, there was never more need than there is at this day for them "that fear the Lord to speak often together," on this very head, how they may "lift up a standard against the iniquity" which overflows the land. There is abundant cause for all the servants of God to join together against the works of the devil; with united hearts and counsels and endeavours to make a stand for God, and to repress, as much as in them lies, these "floods of ungodliness."

5. For this end, a few persons in London, towards the close of the last century, united together, and, after

a while, were termed, *The Society for Reformation of Manners;* and incredible good was done by them for near forty years. But then, most of the original members being gone to their reward, those who succeeded them grew faint in their mind, and departed from the work: so that a few years ago the society ceased; nor did any of the kind remain in the kingdom.

6. It is a society of the same nature which has been lately formed. I purpose to show, first, the nature of their design, and the steps they have hitherto taken: secondly, the excellency of it, with the various objections which have been raised against it: thirdly, what manner of men they ought to be who engage in such a design; and, fourthly, with what spirit, and in what manner, they should proceed in the prosecution of it. I shall conclude with an application both to them, and to all that fear God.

I. 1. I am, first, to show the nature of their design, and the steps they have hitherto taken.

It was on a Lord's day, in August, 1757, that, in a small company who were met for prayer and religious conversation, mention was made of the gross and open profanation of that sacred day, by persons buying and selling, keeping open shop, tippling in alehouses, and standing or sitting in the streets, roads, or fields, vending their wares as on common days; especially in Moorfields, which was then full of them every Sunday, from one end to the other. It was considered, what method could be taken to redress these grievances; and it was agreed, that six of them should, in the morning, wait upon Sir John Fielding for instruction. They did so: he approved of the design, and directed them how to carry it into execution.

2. They first delivered petitions to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen; to the Justices sitting at Hick's Hall, and those in Westminster; and they received from all these honourable benches much encouragement to proceed.

3. It was next judged proper to signify their design

to many persons of eminent rank, and to the body of the clergy, as well as the ministers of other denominations, belonging to the several churches and meetings in and about the cities of London and Westminster; and they had the satisfaction to meet with a hearty consent and universal approbation from them.

4. They then printed and dispersed, at their own expense, several thousand books of instruction to constables and other parish-officers, explaining and enforcing their several duties: and to prevent, as far as possible, the necessity of proceeding to an actual execution of the laws, they likewise printed and dispersed, in all parts of the town, dissuasives from Sabbath-breaking, extracts from acts of Parliament against it, and notices to the offenders.

5. The way being paved by these precautions, it was in the beginning of the year 1758, that, after notices delivered again and again, which were as often set at naught, actual informations were made to the magistrates against persons profaning the Lord's day. By this means they first cleared the streets and fields of those notorious offenders who, without any regard either to God or the king, were selling their wares from morning to night. They proceeded to a more difficult attempt, the preventing tippling on the Lord's day, spending the time in alehouses which ought to be spent in the more immediate worship of God. Herein they were exposed to abundance of reproach, to insult and abuse of every kind; having not only the tipplers, and those who entertained them, the alehouse keepers, to contend with, but rich and honourable men, partly the landlords of those alehouse-keepers, partly those who furnished them with drink, and, in general, all who gained by their sins. Some of these were not only men of substance, but men of authority; nay, in more instances than one, they were the very persons before whom the delinquents were brought. And the treatment they gave those who laid the informations naturally encouraged "the beasts of the people" to follow their example, and

to use them as fellows not fit to live upon the earth. Hence they made no scruple, not only to treat them with the basest language, not only to throw at them mud or stones, or whatever came to hand, but many times to beat them without mercy, and to drag them over the stones or through the kennels. And that they did not murder them was not for want of will; but the bridle was in their teeth.

6. Having, therefore, received help from God, they went on to restrain bakers, likewise, from spending so great a part of the Lord's day in exercising the works of their calling. But many of these were more noble than the victuallers. They were so far from resenting this, or looking upon it as an affront, that several, who had been hurried down the stream of custom to act contrary to their own conscience, sincerely thanked them for their labour, and acknowledged it as a real kindness.

7. In clearing the streets, fields, and alehouses of Sabbath-breakers, they fell upon another sort of offenders, as mischievous to society as any; namely, gamesters of various kinds. Some of these were of the lowest and vilest class, commonly called "gamblers;" who make a trade of seizing on young and inexperienced men, and tricking them out of all their money; and after they have beggared them, they frequently teach them the same mystery of iniquity. Several nests of these they have rooted out, and constrained not a few of them honestly to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow and the labour of their hands.

8. Increasing in number and strength, they extended their views, and began, not only to repress profane swearing, but to remove out of our streets another public nuisance, and scandal of the Christian name,—common prostitutes. Many of these were stopped in their mid career of audacious wickedness. And, in order to go to the root of the disease, many of the houses that entertained them have been detected, prosecuted according to law, and totally suppressed. And some of the poor, desolate women themselves, though fallen to

"The lowest line of human infamy,"

have acknowledged the gracious providence of God, and broke off their sins by lasting repentance. Several of these have been placed out, and several received into the Magdalen Hospital.

9. If a little digression may be allowed, who can sufficiently admire the wisdom of Divine Providence, in the disposal of the times and seasons so as to suit one occurrence to another? For instance: just at a time when many of these poor creatures, being stopped in the course of sin, found a desire of leading a better life, as it were in answer to that sad question, "But if I quit the way I now am in, what can I do to live? For I am not mistress of any trade; and I have no friends that will receive me:"—I say, just at this time, God has prepared the Magdalen Hospital. Here those who have no trade, nor any friends to receive them, are received with all tenderness; yea, they may live, and that with comfort, being provided with all things that are needful "for life and godliness."

10. But to return. The number of persons brought to justice, from August, 1757, to August, 1762, is 9,596

From thence to the present time:—

For unlawful gaming, and profane swearing.....	40
For Sabbath-breaking.....	400
Lewd women, and keepers of ill houses.....	550
For offering to sale obscene prints.....	2
In all.....	10,588

11. In the admission of members into the Society, no regard is had to any particular sect or party. Whoever is found, upon inquiry, to be a good man, is readily admitted. And none who has selfish or pecuniary views will long continue therein; not only because he can gain nothing thereby, but because he would quickly be a loser, inasmuch as he must commence subscriber as soon as he is a member. Indeed, the vulgar cry is, "These are all Whitefieldites." But it is a great mistake. About twenty of the constantly subscribing mem-

bers are all that are in connection with Mr. Whitefield, about fifty are in connection with Mr. Wesley; about twenty, who are of the established Church, have no connection with either; and about seventy are Dissenters; who make, in all, a hundred and sixty. There are, indeed, many more who assist in the work by occasional subscriptions.

II 1. These are the steps which have been hitherto taken in prosecution of this design. I am, in the second place, to show the excellency thereof, notwithstanding the objections which have been raised against it. Now, this may appear from several considerations. And, first, from hence,—that the making an open stand against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness which overspread our land as a flood, is one of the noblest ways of confessing Christ in the face of his enemies. It is giving glory to God, and showing mankind that, even in these dregs of time,

> "There are who faith prefer,
> Though few, and piety to God."

And what more excellent than to render to God the honour due unto his name? to declare, by a stronger proof than words, even by suffering, and running all hazards, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth?"

2. How excellent is the design to prevent, in any degree, the dishonour done to his glorious name, the contempt which is poured on his authority, and the scandal brought upon our holy religion by the gross, flagrant wickedness of those who are still called by the name of Christ! To stem, in any degree, the torrent of vice, to repress the floods of ungodliness, to remove, in any measure, those occasions of blaspheming the worthy name whereby we are called, is one of the noblest designs that can possibly enter into the heart of man to conceive.

3. And as this design thus evidently tends to bring "glory to God in the highest," so it no less manifestly

conduces to the establishing "peace upon earth." For as all sin directly tends both to destroy our peace with God, by setting him at open defiance, to banish peace from our own breasts, and to set every man's sword against his neighbour; so whatever prevents or removes sin does, in the same degree, promote peace,—both peace in our own soul, peace with God, and peace with one another. Such are the genuine fruits of this design, even in the present world. But why should we confine our views to the narrow bounds of time and space? Rather pass over these into eternity. And what fruit of it shall we find there? Let the apostle speak: "Brethren, if one of you do err from the truth, and one convert him," not to this or that opinion, but to God, "let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." (James v. 19, 20.)

4. Nor is it to individuals only, whether those who betray others into sin, or those that are liable to be betrayed and destroyed by them, that the benefit of this design redounds; but to the whole community whereof we are members. For is it not a sure observation, "Righteousness exalteth a nation?" And is it not as sure, on the other hand, that "sin is a reproach to any people," yea, and bringeth down the curse of God upon them? So far, therefore, as righteousness, in any branch, is promoted, so far is the national interest advanced. So far as sin, especially open sin, is restrained, the curse and reproach are removed from us. Whoever, therefore, they are that labour herein, they are general benefactors; they are the truest friends of their king and country. And in the same proportion as their design takes place, there can be no doubt but God will give national prosperity, in accomplishment of his faithful word, "Them that honour me I will honour."

5. But it is objected, "However excellent a design this is, it does not concern *you* For are there not per-

sons to whom the repressing these offences, and punishing the offenders, properly belong? Are there not constables, and other parish officers, who are bound by oath to this very thing?" There are. Constables and churchwardens, in particular, are engaged by solemn oaths to give due information against profaners of the Lord's day, and all other scandalous sinners. But if they leave it undone,—if, notwithstanding their oaths, they trouble not themselves about the matter, it concerns all that fear God, that love mankind, and that wish well to their king and country, to pursue this design with the very same vigour as if there were no officers existing; it being just the same thing, if they are of no use, as if they had no being.

6. "But this is only a pretence: their real design is to get money by giving informations." So it has frequently and roundly been affirmed; but without the least shadow of truth. The contrary may be proved by a thousand instances: no member of the Society takes any part of the money which is by the law allotted to the informer. They never did from the beginning. Nor does any of them ever receive any thing to suppress or withdraw their information. This is another mistake, if not wilful slander, for which there is not the least foundation.

7. "But the design is impracticable. Vice is risen to such a head, that it is impossible to suppress it; especially by such means. For what can a handful of poor people do, in opposition to all the world?" "With men this is impossible, but not with God." And they trust not in themselves, but him. Be then the patrons of vice ever so strong, to him they are no more than grasshoppers. And all means are alike to him: it is the same thing with God "to deliver by many or by few." The small number, therefore, of those who are on the Lord's side is nothing; neither the great number of those that are against him. Still he doeth whatever pleaseth him; and "there is no counsel nor strength against the Lord."

8. "But if the end you aim at be really to reform sinners, you choose the wrong means. It is the word of God must effect this, and not human laws; and it is the work of ministers, not of magistrates: therefore, the applying to these can only produce an outward reformation; it makes no change in the heart."

It is true the word of God is the chief ordinary means whereby he changes both the hearts and lives of sinners; and he does this chiefly by the ministers of the gospel. But it is likewise true, that the magistrate is "the minister of God;" and that he is designed of God to be "a terror to evil-doers," by executing human laws upon them. If this does not change the heart; yet, to prevent outward sin is one valuable point gained. There is so much the less dishonour done to God; less scandal brought on our holy religion; less curse and reproach upon our nation; less temptation laid in the way of others; yea, and less wrath heaped up by the sinners themselves against the day of wrath.

9. "Nay, rather more, for it makes many of them hypocrites, pretending to be what they are not. Others, by exposing them to shame, and putting them to expense, are made impudent and desperate in wickedness: so that, in reality, none of them are any better, if they are not worse, than they were before."

This is a mistake all over. For, (1.) Where are these hypocrites? We know none who have pretended to be what they were not. (2.) The exposing obstinate offenders to shame, and putting them to expense, does not make them desperate in offending, but afraid to offend. (3.) Some of them, far from being worse, are substantially better; the whole tenor of their lives being changed. Yea, (4.) Some are inwardly changed, even "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

10. "But many are not convinced that buying or selling on the Lord's day is a sin."

If they are not convinced, they ought to be; it is high time they should. The case is as plain as plain

can be. For if an open wilful breach both of the law of God and the law of the land is not sin, pray what is? And if such a breach both of divine and human laws is not to be punished, because a man is not convinced it is a sin, there is an end of all execution of justice, and all men may live as they list!

11. "But *mild* methods ought to be tried first." They ought; and so they are. A mild admonition is given to every offender, before the law is put in execution against him; nor is any man prosecuted, till he has express notice, that this will be the case unless he will prevent that prosecution by removing the cause of it. In every case, the mildest method is used which the nature of the case will bear; nor are severer means ever applied, but when they are absolutely necessary to the end.

12. "Well, but after all this stir about reformation, what real good has been done?" Unspeakable good; and abundantly more than any one could have expected in so short a time, considering the small number of the instruments, and the difficulties they had to encounter. Much evil has been already prevented, and much has been removed. Many sinners have been outwardly reformed; some have been inwardly changed. The honour of Him whose name we bear, so openly affronted, has been openly defended. And it is not easy to determine, how many and how great blessings, even this little stand, made for God and his cause, against his daring enemies, may already have derived upon our whole nation. On the whole, then, after all the objections that can be made, reasonable men may still conclude, a more excellent design could scarce ever enter into the heart of man.

III. 1. But what manner of men ought they to be who engage in such a design? Some may imagine, any that are willing to assist therein ought readily to be admitted; and that the greater the number of members, the greater will be their influence. But this is by no means true: matter of fact undeniably proves the

contr. 7. While the former Society for Reformation of Manners consisted of chosen members only, though neither many, rich, nor powerful, they broke through all opposition, and were eminently successful in every branch of their undertaking; but when a number of men less carefully chosen were received into that Society, they grew less and less useful, till, by insensible degrees, they dwindled into nothing.

2. The number, therefore, of the members is no more to be attended to than the riches or eminence. This is a work of God. It is undertaken in the name of God, and for his sake. It follows, that men who neither love nor fear God have no part or lot in this matter. "Why takest thou my covenant in thy mouth?" may God say to any of these; "whereas thou" thyself "hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee." Whoever, therefore, lives in any known sin is not fit to engage in reforming sinners; more especially if he is guilty, in any instance, or in the least degree, of profaning the name of God; of buying, selling, or doing any unnecessary work on the Lord's day; or offending in any other of those instances which this Society is peculiarly designed to reform. No; let none who stands himself in need of this reformation presume to meddle with such an undertaking. First, let him "pull the beam out of his own eye:" let him be himself *unblamable* in all things.

3. Not that this will suffice; every one engaging therein should be more than a harmless man. He should be a man of faith; having, at least, such a degree of that "evidence of things not seen," as to aim "not at the things that are seen, which are temporal, but at those that are not seen, which are eternal;" such faith as produces a steady fear of God, with a lasting resolution, by his grace, to abstain from all that he has forbidden, and to do all that he has commanded. He will more especially need that particular branch of faith,—confidence in God. It is this faith which "removes mountains;" which "quenches the violence of

fire;" which breaks through all opposition; and enables one to stand against and "chase a thousand," knowing in whom his strength lies, and, even when he has the "sentence of death in himself, trusting in Him who raiseth the dead."

4. He that hath faith and confidence in God will, of consequence, be a man of courage. And such it is highly needful every man should be who engages in this undertaking; for many things will occur in the prosecution thereof which are terrible to nature; indeed, so terrible, that all who "confer with flesh and blood" will be afraid to encounter them. Here, therefore, true courage has its proper place, and is necessary in the highest degree. And this faith only can supply. A believer can say,

> "I fear no denial; no danger I fear;
> Nor start from the trial; for Jesus is near."

5. To courage patience is nearly allied; the one regarding future, the other present evils. And whoever joins in carrying on a design of this nature, will have great occasion for this. For, notwithstanding all his unblamableness, he will find himself just in Ishmael's situation,—"his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him." And no wonder: if it be true, that "all who live godly shall suffer persecution," how eminently must this be fulfilled in them who, not content to live godly themselves, compel the ungodly to do so too, or, at least, to refrain from notorious ungodliness! Is not this declaring war against all the world? setting all the children of the devil at defiance? And will not Satan himself, "the prince of this world, the ruler of the darkness" thereof, exert all his subtilty and all his force in support of his tottering kingdom. Who can expect the roaring lion will tamely submit to have the prey plucked out of his teeth? "Ye have" therefore "need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise"

6 And ye have need of steadiness, that ye may

"hold fast" this profession of your faith "without wavering." This also should be found in all that unite in this Society; which is not a task for a "double-minded man"—for one that is "unstable in his ways." He that is as a reed shaken with the wind is not fit for this warfare; which demands a firm purpose of soul, a constant determined resolution. One that is wanting in this may set his hand to the plough; but how soon will he "look back!" He may, indeed, "endure for a time; but when persecution, or tribulation," public or private troubles, arise, because of the work, "immediately he is offended."

7. Indeed, it is hard for any to persevere in so unpleasing a work unless love overpowers both pain and fear. And, therefore, it is highly expedient, that all engaged therein have "the love of God shed abroad in their hearts;" that they should all be able to declare, "We love him, because he first loved us." The presence of him whom their soul loveth will then make their labour light. They can then say, not from the wildness of a heated imagination, but with the utmost truth and soberness,—

> "With thee conversing, I forget
> All time, and toil, and care:
> Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
> While thou, my God, art there."

8. What adds a still greater sweetness, even to labour and pain, is the Christian love of our neighbour. When they "love their neighbour," that is, every soul of man, "as themselves," as their own souls; when "the love of Christ constrains" them to love one another, "even as he loved us;" when, as he "tasted death for every man," so they are "ready to lay down their life for "their brethren;" (including in that number every man, every soul for which Christ died:) what prospect of danger will then be able to fright them from their "labour of love?" What suffering will they not be ready to undergo, to save one soul from everlasting burnings? What continuance of

labour, disappointment, pain, will vanquish their fixed resolution? Will they not be

> "'Gainst all repulses steel'd, nor ever tired
> With toilsome day or ill-succeeding night?"

So love both "hopeth" and "endureth all things;" so "charity never faileth."

9. Love is necessary for all the members of such a Society, on another account likewise; even because "it is not puffed up:" it produces not only courage and patience, but humility. And oh, how needful is this for all who are so employed! What can be of more importance, than that they should be little, and mean, and base, and vile, in their own eyes! For, otherwise, should they think themselves any thing, should they impute any thing to themselves, should they admit any thing of a Pharisaic spirit, "trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others;" nothing could more directly tend to overthrow the whole design. For then they would not only have all the world, but also God himself to contend with; seeing he "resisteth the proud, and giveth grace" only "to the humble." Deeply conscious, therefore, should every member of this Society be of his own foolishness, weakness, helplessness; continually hanging, with his whole soul, upon Him who alone hath wisdom and strength, with an unspeakable conviction that "the help which is done upon earth, God doeth it himself;" and that it is he alone who "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

10. One point more whoever engages in this design should have deeply impressed on his heart; namely, that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Let him, therefore, learn of Him who was meek, as well as lowly; and let him abide in meekness, as well as humility; "with all lowliness and meekness," let him "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called." Let him be "gentle toward all

men," good or bad, for his own sake, for their sake, for Christ's sake. Are any "ignorant, and out of the way?" let him have "compassion" upon them. Do they even oppose the word and work of God, yea, set themselves in battle array against it? So much the more hath he need "in meekness to instruct those who thus oppose themselves;" if haply they may "escape out of the snare of the devil;" and no more be "taken captive at his will."

IV. 1. From the qualifications of those who are proper to engage in such an undertaking as this, I proceed to show, fourthly, with what spirit, and in what manner it ought to be pursued. First, with what spirit. Now, this first regards the *motive*, which is to be preserved in every step that is taken; for if, at any time, "the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! But if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." This is, therefore, continually to be remembered, and carried into every word and action. Nothing is to be spoke or done, either great or small, with a view to any temporal advantage; nothing with a view to the favour or esteem, the love or the praise of men. But the intention, the eye of the mind, is always to be fixed on the glory of God and good of man.

2. But the spirit with which every thing is to be done regards the *temper* as well as the motive. And this is no other than that which has been described above. For the same courage, patience, steadiness, which qualify a man for the work, are to be exercised therein. Above all, let him "take the shield of faith;" this will quench a thousand fiery darts. Let him exert all the faith which God has given him, in every trying hour. And let all his doings be done in love: never let this be wrested from him. Neither must many waters quench this love, nor the floods of ingratitude drown it. Let, likewise, that lowly mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus; yea, and let him "be clothed with humility," filling his heart, and

adorning his whole behaviour. At the same time, let him "put on bowels of mercies, gentleness, long-suffering;" avoiding the least appearance of malice, bitterness, anger, or resentment; knowing it is our calling, not to be "overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." In order to preserve this humble, gentle love, it is needful to do all things with recollection of spirit; watching against all hurry, or dissipation of thought, as well as against pride, wrath, or surliness. But this can be no otherwise preserved than by "continuing instant in prayer," both before and after he comes into the field, and during the whole action; and by doing all in the spirit of sacrifice, offering all to God through the Son of his love.

3. As to the outward manner of acting, a general rule is, Let it be expressive of these inward tempers. But, to be more particular: let every man beware not to "do evil that good may come." Therefore, "putting away all lying, let every man speak the truth to his neighbour." Use no fraud or guile, either in order to detect or to punish any man; but "by simplicity and godly sincerity commend yourself to men's consciences in the sight of God." It is probable that, by your adhering to these rules, fewer offenders will be convicted; but so much the more will the blessing of God accompany the whole undertaking.

4. But let innocence be joined with prudence, properly so called: not that offspring of hell which the world calls prudence, which is mere craft, cunning, dissimulation; but with that "wisdom from above" which our Lord peculiarly recommends to all who would promote his kingdom upon earth: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents," while ye are "harmless as doves." This wisdom will instruct you how to suit your words and whole behaviour to the persons with whom you have to do; to the time, place, and all other circumstances. It will teach you to cut off occasion of offence, even from those who seek occasion, and to do things of the most offensive nature in the least offensive manner that is possible.

5. Your manner of speaking, particularly to offenders, should be at all times deeply serious, (lest it appear like insulting or triumphing over them,) rather inclining to sad; showing that you pity them for what they do, and sympathize with them in what they suffer. Let your air and tone of voice, as well as words, be dispassionate, calm, mild; yea, where it would not appear like dissimulation, even kind and friendly. In some cases, where it will probably be received as it is meant, you may profess the good-will you bear them; but, at the same time, (that it may not be thought to proceed from fear, or any wrong inclination,) professing your intrepidity, and inflexible resolution to oppose and punish vice to the uttermost.

V. 1. It remains only to make some application of what has been said; partly to you who are already engaged in this work; partly to all that fear God; and more especially to them that love as well as fear him.

With regard to you who are already engaged in this work, the first advice I would give you is, calmly and deeply to consider the nature of your undertaking. Know what you are about; be thoroughly acquainted with what you have in hand; consider the objections which are made to the whole of your undertaking; and, before you proceed, be satisfied that those objections have no real weight: then may every man act as he is fully persuaded in his own mind.

2. I advise you, secondly, be not in haste to increase your number: and, in adding thereto, regard not wealth, rank, or any outward circumstance; only regard the qualifications above described. Inquire diligently, whether the person proposed be of an unblamable carriage, and whether he be a man of faith, courage, patience, steadiness; whether he be a lover of God and man. If so, he will add to your strength, as well as number: if not, you will lose by him more than you gain; for you will displease God. And be not afraid to purge out from among you any who do not answer the preceding character. By thus lessening your number,

you will increase your strength: you will be "vessels meet for your Master's use."

3. I would, thirdly, advise you narrowly to observe from what motive you at any time act or speak. Beware that your intention be not stained with any regard either to profit or praise. Whatever you do, "do it to the Lord," as the servants of Christ. Do not aim at pleasing yourself in any point, but pleasing Him whose you are and whom you serve. Let your eye be single, from first to last; eye God alone in every word and work.

4. I advise you, in the fourth place, see that you do every thing in a right temper; with lowliness and meekness, with patience and gentleness, worthy the gospel of Christ. Take every step, trusting in God, and in the most tender, loving spirit you are able. Meantime, watch always against all hurry and dissipation of spirit; and pray, always, with all earnestness and perseverance, that your faith fail not. And let nothing interrupt that spirit of sacrifice which you make of all you have and are, of all you suffer and do, that it may be an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God, through Jesus Christ.

5. As to the manner of acting and speaking, I advise you to do it with all innocence and simplicity, prudence and seriousness. Add to these, all possible calmness and mildness; nay, all the tenderness which the case will bear. You are not to behave as butchers, or hangmen; but as surgeons rather, who put the patient to no more pain than is necessary in order to the cure. For this purpose, each of you, likewise, has need of "a lady's hand, with a lion's heart." So shall many, even of them you are constrained to punish, "glorify God in the day of visitation."

6. I exhort all of you who fear God, as ever you hope to find mercy at his hands, as you dread being found (though you knew it not) "even to fight against God," do not, on any account, reason, or pretence whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, oppose or hinder so merciful a design, and one so conducive to his glory. But this is

not all: if you are lovers of mankind, if you long to lessen the sins and miseries of your fellow-creatures, can you satisfy yourselves, can you be clear before God, by barely not opposing it? Are not you also bound, by the most sacred ties, "as you have opportunity, to do good to all men?" And is not here an opportunity of doing good to many, even good of the highest kind? In the name of God, then, embrace the opportunity! Assist in doing this good, if no otherwise, yet by your earnest prayers for them who are immediately employed therein. Assist them, according to your ability, to defray the expense which necessarily attends it, and which without the assistance of charitable persons, would be a burden they could not bear. Assist them, if you can without inconvenience, by quarterly or yearly subscriptions. At least, assist them *now;* use the present hour, doing what God puts into your heart. Let it not be said, that you saw your brethren labouring for God, and would not help them with one of your fingers. In this way, however, "come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty!"

7. I have a higher demand upon you who love as well as fear God. He whom you fear, whom you love, has qualified you for promoting his work in a more excellent way Because you love God, you love your brother also: you love, not only your friends, but your enemies; not only the friends, but even the enemies, of God. You have "put on, as the elect of God, lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering." You have faith in God, and in Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; faith which overcometh the world: and hereby you conquer both evil and shame, and that "fear of man which bringeth a snare;" so that you can stand with boldness before them that despise you, and make no account of your labours. Qualified, then, as you are, and armed for the fight, will you be like the children of Ephraim, "who, being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle?" Will *you* leave a few of your brethren to stand alone, against all the hosts of the aliens? Oh, say not, "This is too heavy a cross; I

have not courage or strength to bear it!" True; not of yourself: but you that believe "can do all things through Christ strengthening you." If "thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." No cross is too heavy for *him* to bear; knowing that they that "suffer with him shall reign with him." Say not, "Nay, but I cannot bear to be *singular*." Then you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. No one enters there but through the narrow way; and all that walk in this are singular. Say not, "But I cannot endure the reproach, the odious name of an informer." And did any man ever save his soul, that was not a byword, and a proverb of reproach? Neither canst thou ever save thine, unless thou art willing that men should say all manner of evil of thee. Say not, "But if I am active in this work, I shall lose, not only my reputation, but my friends, my customers, my business, my livelihood; so that I shall be brought to poverty." Thou shalt not; thou canst not; it is absolutely impossible, unless God himself chooseth it; for his "kingdom ruleth over all," and "the very hairs of thy head are all numbered." But if the wise, the gracious God choose it for thee, wilt thou murmur or complain? Wilt thou not rather say, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" If you "suffer for Christ, happy are you; the Spirit of glory and of God" shall "rest upon you." Say not, "I would suffer all things, but my wife will not consent to it; and, certainly, a man ought to leave father and mother and all, and cleave to his wife." True; all but God; all but Christ: but he ought not to leave him for his wife! He is not to leave any duty undone, for the dearest relative. Our Lord himself hath said in this very sense, "If any man love father, or mother, or wife, or children, more than me, he is not worthy of me." Say not, "Well, I would forsake all for Christ; but one duty must not hinder another; and this would frequently hinder my attending public worship." Sometimes it probably would. "Go then, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." And

whatever is lost by showing this mercy, God will repay seven-fold into thy bosom. Say not, "But I shall hurt my own soul. I am a young man; and by taking up loose women I shall expose myself to temptation." Yes, if you did this in your own strength, or for your own pleasure. But that is not the case. You trust in God; and you aim at pleasing him only. And if he should call you even into the midst of a burning fiery-furnace, "though thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." "True; if he called me into the furnace; but I do not see that I am called to this." Perhaps thou art not willing to see it. However, if thou wast not called before, I call thee now, in the name of Christ: take up thy cross and follow him! Reason no more with flesh and blood, but now resolve to cast in thy lot with the most despised, the most infamous of his followers; the filth and off-scouring of the world! I call thee in particular, who didst once strengthen their hands, but since art drawn back. Take courage! be strong! Fulfil their joy by returning with heart and hand! Let it appear thou "departedst for a season, that they might receive thee again for ever." Oh, be "not disobedient to the heavenly calling!" And, as for all of you who know whereunto ye are called, count ye all things loss, so ye may save one soul for which Christ died! And therein "take no thought for the morrow," but "cast all your care on Him that careth for you!" Commit your souls, bodies, substance, all to him, "as unto a merciful and faithful Creator!"

*** After this Society had subsisted several years, and done unspeakable good, it was wholly destroyed by a verdict given against it in the King's Bench, with three hundred pounds damages. I doubt a severe account remains for the witnesses, the jury, and all who were concerned in that dreadful affair!

QUESTIONS ON SERMON LII.

Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What have wicked men combined to do in all ages?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is the original design of the Church of Christ?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) For what purpose were the members of the Church of England united?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What was still needed in England?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What did a few persons in London propose toward the close of the seventeenth century? What effects did these Societies produce?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) What had been lately formed?

Ques. 7. (I. 1.) What is first proposed in this discourse? When was the Society organized? Give the history of the movement.

Ques. 8. (I. 2.) What was the first step taken?

Ques. 9. (I. 3.) What did they think it proper to do?

Ques. 10. (I. 4.) What did they print and circulate?

Ques. 11. (I. 5.) What was done in the beginning of the year 1758?

Ques. 12. (I. 6.) What action did they take relating to the bakers?

Ques. 13. (I. 7.) What was their course toward gamesters of all kinds?

Ques. 14. (I. 8.) As they grew in strength, what was their next step?

Ques. 15. (I. 9.) What is here said of the Magdalene Hospital?

Ques. 16. (I. 10.) What were the results of these prosecutions?

Ques. 17. (I. 11.) Was this Society sectarian in its membership? How was it composed?

Ques. 18. (II. 1.) What does he propose to show in the second place?

Ques. 19. (II. 2.) What is said of the design of this Society in regard to those who are called by the name of Christ?

Ques. 20. (II. 3.) To what did their design tend?

Ques. 21. (II. 4.) Were the benefits confined to individuals? What effect was produced in the community?

Ques. 22. (II. 5.) What objection is here stated? How answered?

Ques. 23. (II. 6.) What is the second objection? What answer is made?

Ques. 24. (II. 7.) What is the third objection? How answered?

Ques. 25. (II. 8.) State the fourth objection. How is it answered?

Ques. 26. (II. 9.) What is the next objection? How answered?

Ques. 27. (II. 10.) What is the next objection? How answered?

Ques. 28. (II. 11.) What is the next? How is it answered?

Ques. 29. (II. 12.) What is the next objection? How answered?

Ques. 30. (III. 1.) What is said of the proper persons to do this work?

Ques. 31. (III. 2.) If numbers are not required what is essential?

Ques. 32. (III. 3.) What must he be who is qualified for it?

Ques. 33. (III. 4.) What is the consequence of faith and confidence in God?

Ques. 34. (III. 5.) To what is courage nearly allied?

Ques. 35. (III. 6.) What else did they need?

Ques. 36. (III. 7.) What else is highly expedient?

Ques. 37. (III. 8.) What adds still greater sweetness?

Ques. 38. (III. 9.) What is necessary for all members?

Ques. 39. (III. 10.) What further point is added?

Ques. 40. (IV. 1.) What does he propose to show fourthly?

Ques. 41. (IV. 2.) What is said of the spirit in which the work is done?

Ques. 42. (IV. 3.) What of the outward manner of acting?

Ques. 43. (IV. 4.) What should be joined to innocence?

Ques. 44. (IV. 5.) What is said of the manner of speaking?

Ques. 45. (V. 1.) What is the first advice given?

Ques. 46. (V. 2.) What is the second?

Ques. 47. (V. 3, 4.) What is the third? The fourth?

Ques. 48. (V. 5.) What is advised as to the manner of acting and speaking?

Ques. 49. (V. 6, 7.) How does the argument continue? What is the meaning of the note appended to the sermon?

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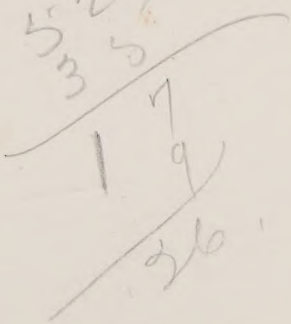
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